BCM

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Interviews

Satsuki
Ekotumi
Madmans Esprit
HIGH TECH LOW LIFE

Fashion & features

Travel Japan
Fall fashion
Halloween fashion

INORAN

Starlight in 2019

IN THIS EDITION

Fashion

Halloween p.18-30
Fall p.50-55

J-music corner

Reviews and concert pages p.59-65
Interviews with Madmans Esprit p.67-68
Satsuki p.70-72
Ekotumi p.74-76
INORAN p.78-79
HIGH TECH LOW LIFE p.80-81

Art, travel and lifestyle

Travel photography p.84-96
Travel Tales p.14-16
Beauty tutorials p.5-11
SFX safety p.12-13
The Ecological Gazette p.105
Event reviews p.31-48
BCM reads p.57
BCM watchlist p.58

And more

Snap p.101-103
Win a signed cheki p.69, 73, 77 & 82
Check that Cheki p.98
#filmisnotdead p.100

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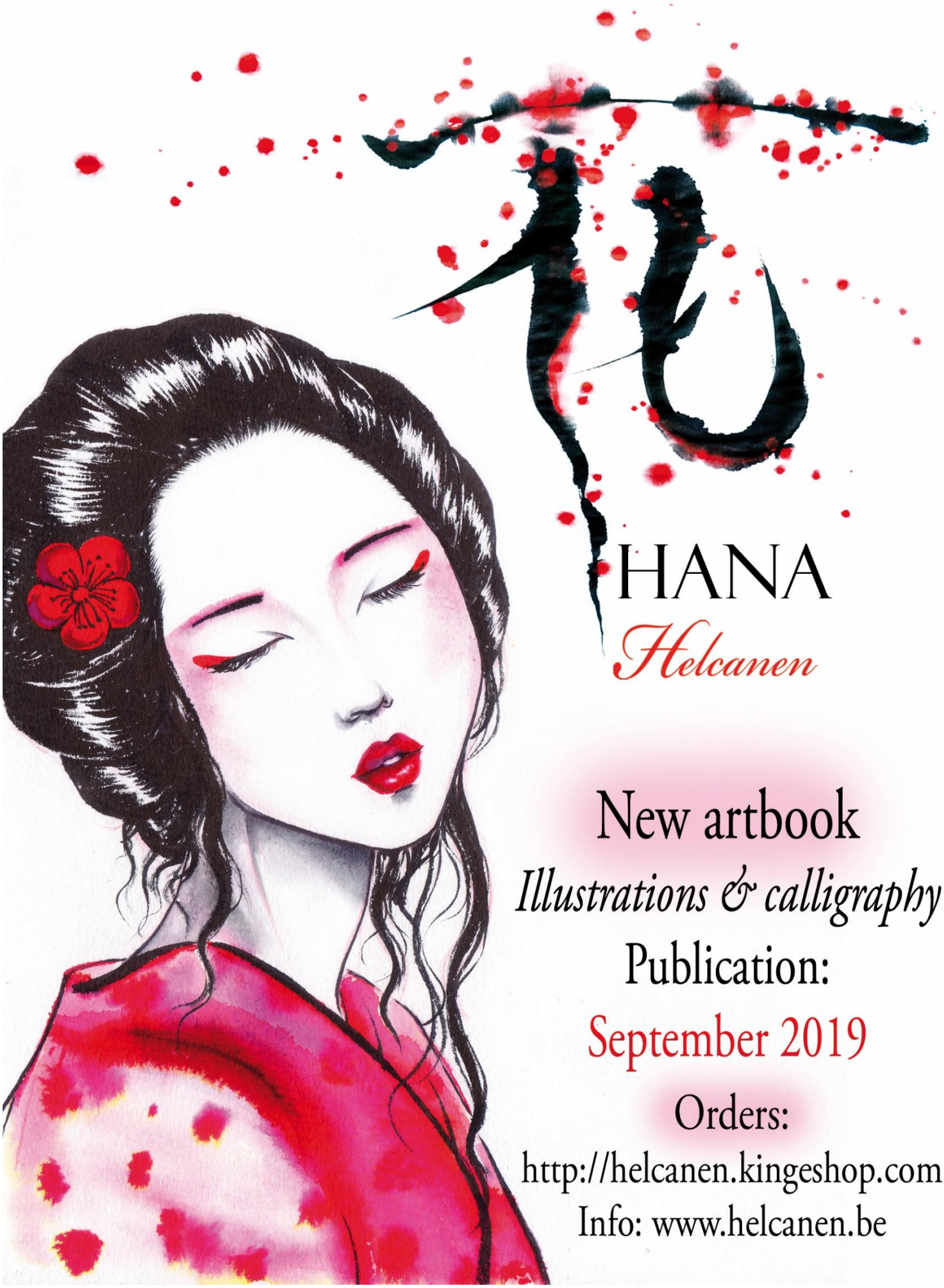
Disclaimer: The opinions expressed by people interviewed are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the BCM staff. Thus we can and will not be held responsible, nor accountable for them. It is also worth noting that this is a volunteer run publication.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 40th and, for the foreseeable future, last edition of BCM.
Yes, that's right, BCM is going on a hiatus. We might be back in a while, but we might also not be. The reason is simple: I have other things, such as my education, I have to prioritise right now, and putting together a magazine is simply not combinable with life at the moment. Considering I can't guarantee quality anymore, I rather put this on hold. If I bring it back, it will be full force again, but I'm not doing a half assed job. We've been around for over 7+ years, and I wish to profoundly thank all the friends I've made being editor in chief, the cool people I've met, everyone who helped this together, be it translators, management, artists, record company folks, my amazing crew and especially you, our reader.
Make sure to keep an eye on the socials of our crew members, because they're bound to be doing more amazing things in the future!

It's been a blast, but sadly all good things must come to an end! From the bottom of my heart: thank you for being with us!

Hilde Heyvaert
Editor in chief



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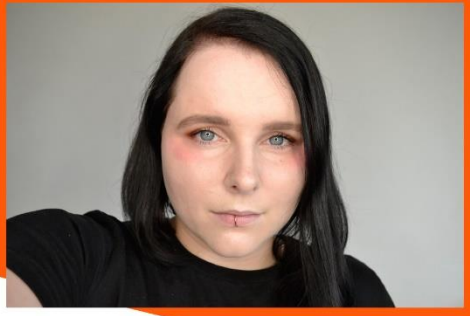
HALLOWEEN GLAMOUR

Shinjuku Halloween

My favourite season of the year is coming back around the corner, it's autumn! This time I wanted to hand you a seasonal look that is easy to replicate, can be worn for school and work, but also for a night out. But first and foremost, I wanted to come up with a way to wear Halloween inspired make-up during the day without getting weird looks. So, I took my Hallows Eve inspiration and stirred this into a bubbling cauldron, along with a few Asian make-up trends I spotted online. I think the result will make you gibber with ghoulish delight. Muahaha!

By Claire Van Laere
instagram.com/clairedanslalune16



As always, I have already primed my face and applied concealer and foundation one tint lighter than my natural shade. I also used some highlighter to bring a subtle dewy glow to my face. As you can see. I also coloured in my brows but kept them as natural as possible. Now I have a blank canvas to work with. You could use a powder to seal everything in, but instead I used for a sealing spray.

For the eyes I'm first going in with a pale orange eyeshadow and I apply this in a wide bow along the crease. Make sure to blend it out well. Next, I'm using a burnt orange to draw a sharp triangle and I blend it inward to create a soft wing along the eye. I picked orange because it reminded me of jack o' lanterns, but pink would go just as well. To finish it off I apply a very pale nude eyeshadow to my inner corners. Blend it in until it meets the orange. Normally this is where I would apply some eyeliner, but instead I chose just to use mascara. This will brighten my face and open up my eyes a bit more

I'm doing something that I don't do a lot, which is applying blush. I chose a soft rose shade and applied it just under my eyes. I got this idea from Japanese street fashion bloggers, like RinRin Doll. This effect is supposed to make you look flushed or even a bit feverish, so I'd advise using a warmer shade of pink.

For the lips I'm using a bright red liquid lipstick, but I'm applying it to the inner parts of my lips. Again, I got this idea from various Japanese and Korean fashion bloggers, so I can't take credit. I'm first using the brush to apply the lipstick to the inside of my lips and feather is out with my fingers. This effect makes it look as if you just drank some blood. Its a good way for sneaking some vampire chique into you daily routine.

And we're ready for the day!
We mixed a drop of Halloween spirit, a smidge of fall colours and a spoonful of J- and K-fashion into our cauldron and mixed it into a makeup look that can be worn on many occasions. It's the perfect way to sneak some spookiness into you daily life. Have a great fall season and an amazing Halloween.

Products used: *Anastasia Beverly Hills*, Brow Wiz. *Bourjois*, Rouge Edition Velvet liquid lipstick in Purple Burgundy. *Fenti*, Beauty pro filt'r foundation. *Gerard Cosmetics*, Slay All Day Setting Spray. *Kiko Milano*, high pigment wet and dry eyeshadow in Matte Sienna, Indian Masala and satin peach and, Velvet touch Creamy Stick Blush in natural rose. *M.A.C*, In Extreme Dimension Lash Mascara. *NYX*, can't stop won't stop concealer. *Pixi*, Flawless and Poreless primer. *Urban Decay*, naked skin concealer and primer potion eyeshadow primer.

Evil Goblin Glown

PUTTING THE TRICK IN TRICK OR TREAT!

Hello boils, ghouls and creatures of the night and welcome to my little corner of creepy. Last year I did a Jack-o-Lantern makeup look so this year let's do something spooky and fun for Halloween! What screams spooky fun for everyone? Scary clowns of course! In my mind a creepy clown HAS to have a creepy smile so in this pictorial I will show you how I created and applied the candycorn tooth fx as well as the rest of the makeup on my face and body to put this clown look together.

This is my take on a creepy clown, but I would LOVE to see your variations- Please tag me (@BirdBrainFX) so I can see your results!

By BirdBrainFX
www.instagram.com/birdbrainfx

Part 1:
Candy corn teeth

This portion of the tutorial is completely optional. If you're not interested in the FX portions of the look then feel free to skip this step.

STEP 1: I started out by selecting long acrylic nails that would fit around my mouth in the desired shape. I chose two different sizes because I wanted them to be as unsettling to look at as possible. I laid them out how I wanted them to see what they would look like and I also painted more than I intended to use on my face just in case of mistakes

STEP 2: Using white, orange and yellow nail polish I painted the stripes on each nail so it would look like candy corn. After drying I hit them with clear coat.

STEP 3: When the nails were completely dry I cut the ends into points. Again, this was to make them look like candy corn, but also to make them look more menacing to the eye.

STEP 4: I unraveled a cotton ball and gently pulled it apart so that I had two strips of cotton to work with; one for the top set of teeth and the other for the bottom. One by one I glued each nail to the strips of cotton using prosaid and then waited for them to dry. Then they were ready to use!

Part 2:

Clown makeup

STEP 1: Using White water actived facepaint and a damp tack sponge apply a base of white all over the chest, neck and face. This does not have to be a solid base and that goes doubly so for a creepy clown considering splotchy/ harsh paintjobs just make it look more legitimately terrifying (at least to a makeup artist!).

STEP 2: Next using an orange water activated facepaint and a damp tack sponge apply ovals around the eye area. To add more dimension to the neck area use the orange and blend downward for a pop of color there too.

STEP 3: To deepen the orange on the eyes use a dark orange eyeshadow on a large fluffy brush concentrating the color down the center of the oval.

STEP 4: Using the same orange eyeshadow and brush you can also give yourself some round dots of blush on the cheeks.

STEP 5: Next using a yellow eyeshadow on a new fluffy shadow brush add even more dimension around the perimeters of the eyes and cheek blush. I like a yellowing look to creepy clowns so this is just a personal preference in my design.

STEP 6: Using a damp tack sponge and orange water activated facepaint create stripes down the front of the body by loading the sponge with color and dragging it across in one motion.

STEP 7: Again to add that subtle yellowing use a Yellow eyeshadow on a fluffy shadow brush around the center of each orange line created with the sponge.

STEP 8: You can really go wild with this step, creatively speaking! Using black water activated facepaint add pointy triangles above and below the eyes. Next ,outline the eye area in an oval shape and add freckles around the face if desired.

STEP 9: Black out the lips using a matte black lipstick before applying prosthetics because its easier to do it before as opposed to after.

STEP 10: Using a q-tip apply prosaid around the mouth area and wait for it to be partially dry before applying the pre-made candycorn tooth prosthetic.

STEP 11: Apply the tooth prosthetics one lip at a time so you can adjust for fit.

STEP 12: The longer the teeth the farther you'll have to space them apart in order to wear them comfortably so be mindful of the spacing. Ideally the teeth should be able to retain some form of expression when you move your face.

STEP 13: To secure the teeth to the face apply a layer of liquid latex (use latex that is safe to use on your skin).

STEP 14: Continue applying the latex upwards in a smiling expression.

STEP 15: Apply bits of deconstructed cotton ball along the wet liquid latex to build up an unsettling smile.

STEP 16: Using another q-tip apply liquid latex over the cotton and wait for it to dry.

STEP 17: While waiting for it to dry use black water activated facepaint to add horizontal stripes down the neck and chest. Be efficient with your drying time!

STEP 18: Also optional, but drying was taking a long time, so, using prosaid add half pearls around the eye area to make it pop out a little more.

STEP 19: Once the latex on the sides of the face is dry pull it apart and pinch the lips into a smile. Latex naturally sticks to itself so it's easy to roll and manipulate into different shapes.

STEP 20: Using Orange water activated face paint fill in some big messy clown lips over the latex.

STEP 21: To fill in the rest of the mouth area apply black water activated facepaint. Finish it off by lining the lips into a smile. The grimier the creepier!

STEP 22: To attach the latex clown nose apply liquid latex to the nose and on the interior of the fake nose. When they're partially dry attach to the nose and manipulate as desired before it dries completely.

STEP 23: To make sure the latex nose doesn't move apply liquid latex around the edges of the nose and onto the skin. Wait for it to dry.

STEP 24: Apply black facepaint around the perimeter of the nose to hide the edges and better blend the nose into the makeup. Apply translucent setting powder to the face and the look is complete!

Products used: Acrylic Nails, cottonballs and Q-tips. *Graftobian*, Translucent Powder. *Juvia's Place*, The Zulu Palette (orange and yellow). *Mehron*, Paradise AQ (white, orange and black). *The Monster Makers*, ProTac. *Ben Nye*, Liquid Latex.

HALLOWEEN IS UPON US AND THAT MEANS FAKE BLOOD AND GORE. THERE ARE TONS OF SFX ARTIST OUT THERE ON SOCIAL MEDIA, SHOWING OFF THEIR SKILLS, BUT WHAT IS OFTEN LEFT UNSAID IS SAFETY. SFX IS AWESOME, FOR SURE, BUT IT'S ALSO THE SUREST WAY TO END UP WITH RASHES, A LACK OF BODY HAIR AND ACTUAL BLOOD AND GORE FROM CUTS AND SCRAPES. THEREFORE TWO MEMBERS OF THE CREW THAT ACTUALLY KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING WHEN IT COMES TO TRADITIONAL SFX MAKEUP, HAVE SUMMED UP A LIST OF THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR. THE MOST IMPORTANT ONES WHEN IT COMES TO THE UPCOMING HALLOWEEN SEASON FOR ENTHUSIASTS AT LEAST. THERE ARE FAR MORE PROFESSIONAL GRADE PRODUCTS OUT THERE, BUT CHANCES YOU ARE GOING TO FIND THEM EASILY OR WANT TO TRY YOUR HAND AT THEM IF YOU'RE NOT DOING THIS PROFESSIONALLY ARE SLIM, SO HERE ARE THE BASICS YOU SHOULD KNOW!

FAKE BLOOD

Fake blood rarely comes with instructions, which is problematic. Unless you are mixing up fake blood from 100% household and edible products, these simple rules apply: Do not ingest (unless your fake blood clearly states it is edible it should be considered unsafe for consumption or use on the lips). And do NOT get it in your eyes. Fake blood that is specifically designed to be used in your eyes exists, if you want bloodshot eyes: go with that. A word of advise: home-made fake blood tends to be a sticky, disgusting mess. And fake blood in general tends to stain, some of it doesn't even fully dry. So be prepared to ruin clothes, be pink for a while or generally uncomfortable. This isn't the case for all fake blood, but generally the cheaper you go, the more likely you will encounter this issue. It's also fairly easy to make your own fake blood with lipstick (preferably liquid), all you need is red, brown or black and a clear gloss. And from there on it's just practising 'till you find the right colour combo. The same goes if you have these colours in water activated paints around. Don't use them around or in your eyes unless the products are eye safe though! Any clothing items covered in fake blood should probably be washed separately or with dark colored clothes to avoid staining lighter colored fabrics. Fake blood is also likely to stain certain surfaces in the home. When using large quantities it's best to either go outside or lay out a drop cloth on or around the work space if you think you'll be getting particularly messy inside.

PAINT

Alcohol activated paint is definitely very cool, as it allows you to do a lot of neat things. However, it's expensive and you need 99% alcohol to activate it and to remove it, which can be murder on your skin. Especially if you already have dry or irritated skin. If you work with these, make sure to have a good moisturiser on hand for when it's all come off. Whilst you can do a lot of cool things with these paints, and they yield fantastic results, you can get excellent results with these cheaper alternatives that you don't need 99% alcohol for. And the application method is the exact same thing! Grease paint is probably somewhere in the middle, it's a little pricier than water activated paint, but tends to stay on longer if you're going to be sweaty or in the rain. However, a the name implies, it is very greasy, meaning that if you have sensitive skin, you should apply extreme caution when using this. Water activated paints are cheapest and easiest to come by and are easiest to remove as all you need is water. If you're just going to do some bruises, fake blood, or other face/body paint for Halloween, we'd advise going for these, as they are generally cheapest but also very easy to work with. You also don't need to invest in special brushes for these, a pack of cheap children's paint brushes that doesn't shed hair all over the place will do! Besides brushes Tack Sponges are also inexpensive and work wonders for quick coverage on looks using water activated facepaint. Tack sponges can be purchased as large rounds and easily modified into quarters with a pair of scissors, so 1 sponge can essentially be used for 4 different colors. Tack sponges can also be used to create a color gradient effect because color is easy to blend with the rounded ends of the sponge. They also wash out easy since they're so porous, but tend to stain with darker water activated paints; either way they're very cost effective for multiple uses if properly cared for.

NO MUSS, NO FUSS: PROS-AID

Before we delve into the safe ways to work with different adhesives, let's start with the one that is the absolute safest to use and least likely to cause you issues as it's essentially a medical grade product: Pros-aid. Pros-aid is best compared to that thick white craft glue we all know, but for your skin. And it will stick pretty much everything and anything to your skin, provided its suitable (right size, weight, that sort of thing). You can even stick falsies to your eyelids with pros-aid. The main advantage is that it literally comes off with warm water and soap (you really do need that). Its water based, so unless you are going for a swim, wander around in a downpour or sweat profusely, this will last all day and it will be easy to remove. Even if you accidently stick it in baby hairs, it should come off without too much pain and misery in the shower. Pros-aid is probably the easiest and safest SFX adhesive out there. Not the most spectacular, but fairly beginner friendly and you can do a lot with pros-aid, especially when you are working with store bought prosthetics, or just want to glue a couple small things to yourself.

LATEX

Liquid latex is probably the best known of all the SFX tools. Sadly, there is quite a lot of safety involved a lot of people don't talk about. You may have a latex allergy that can suddenly rear it's head. It can be a little tricky to remove, and it can cause serious skin irritation, especially when not applied correctly. There's also a bit of a learning curve with liquid latex. If you are serious about getting into SFX, this is definitely a medium you should practise with, but our advise would be to look up some really good tutorials online that also deal with all the necessary safety involved, as the potential for fuck-ups is pretty great. And whatever you do, avoid cheap shitty latex, because the chances of irritation is pretty high. Invest in a good quality product, and you'll be less likely to be bothered by it, and the results will be much, much better. Make sure the latex products are intended for skin! There are mask grade latex products and skin safe latex products. Mask latex is great for props but absolutely horrid for your skin since it isn't graded for safe use and very abrasive during removal (even if you accidentally get some on your hands). Be wary and read the descriptions THOROUGHLY before purchasing latex products.

WAX AND GELATINE

You can, in theory at least, not do much wrong with **wax**. It's just very tricky to work with, especially for large surfaces, and it is definitely subject to body temperature. So you don't even have to break an actual sweat for anything to go horribly wrong. Wax definitely has it's uses, but they are more for photos and videos rather than actual wear. If you do go for wax to create small wounds etc, make sure to apply Vaseline or makeup remover on your fingers and tools so the stuff doesn't stick to them. Also: it's pretty greasy, so make sure to use a cleanser afterwards that will get everything out of your pores.
Gelatine is probably a good alternative to latex. The only real danger you are in is of getting burned, so abide by the instructions. It can be a little tricky to work with as it can be very runny, but it coagulates fairly quickly, and you can get some really cool effects with it. If you just want to do one time gore, or you're allergic to latex, we would definitely recommend looking into SFX gelatine. People have been known to make the stuff at home, but with mixed results and less comfort, so if you don't want to bother with that: look into buying actual skin safe SFX gelatine.
And also make sure to put some Vaseline in your baby hairs and shave arms and legs before use, else there's a good chance you'll be accidently epilating yourself when you remove this (which is an issue with pretty much everything but wax and pros-aid).

SPIRIT GUM

Let us start by saying this: under NO circumstance should you be substituting nail glue for spirit gum. NEVER. Regardless of who has done it on the internet, do NOT follow suit. And do not forget that for spirit gum, you need a spirit gum remover. You also need to make sure to put Vaseline in eyebrows, baby hairs and other surfaces of skin that have hair on them, because you will rip out the hairs afterwards. Frankly, spirit gum may be the more popular option, but unless copious amounts of sweat and water are involved, you are better off with pros-aid or even liquid latex. The number one problem people come across during application of this product is that they don't tap it before sticking on their prosthetic! Spirit Gum is activated with heat and the product will slip and slide all over the place if you don't gently tap it with your fingertip before sticking something on. Sure, you can adhere a piece to your flesh using Spirit Gum without tapping it, but for a good strong and secure hold it really helps to tap it out first!

TOOLS

We can not stress this enough, but **tools are important**. Unless you are very sure of yourself and you know you won't accidently stab yourself, don't go for metal ceramist carving tools, as they are usually very sharp, and several of these products tend to be a little slippery. Use plastic cupcake decorating tools instead. They have the same heads, so you can easily get the same results, with much less chance of injury.
Always **sanitise** your tools, if you don't have isopropyl (70 to 99%) alcohol, washing them with warm water and soap is the absolute basics. If you have metal tools, pouring boiling water on them is the way forward.
Properly wash all your SFX brushes before use, just as you would (and definitely should) regular make-up brushes.

Most SFX staples you need to work with products such as latex are easy to find as they are cotton balls, soap, Vaseline, kitchen paper, and such. But the things like wax, gelatine, fake blood, latex, pros-aid and such can be harder to find, especially if you are going for a better quality product than what your local supermarket has on offer for the holiday. Luckily, there are plenty of stores online that cater to SFX needs, for very reasonable prices.

FURTHERMORE

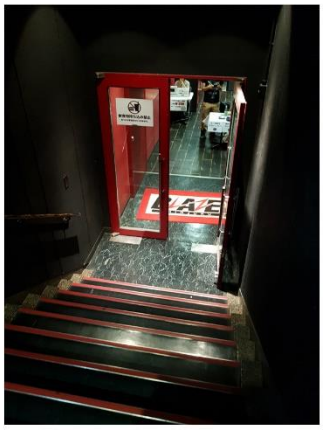
And of course the usual: do not use products on skin that is already irritated, scabbed or broken. If you have problem skin or sensitive skin consult your doctor/specialist and/or ingredients (whichever applies). Do a test swatch on your wrist or inside your elbow to see if you don't have an allergic reaction.
Always, and we can not stress this enough, **do your own research** as well. Its not because your favourite influencer uses a certain product and it works for them, it will work for you. Look into the different products, see how they dry, what you need to properly work with them and check the ingredient list.
If you are applying SFX on other people: ALWAYS thoroughly check for allergies and skin conditions. If someone has a bad break-out, you should net be applying latex, gelatine, wax or spirit gum to their skin!

Article and photography by BirdbrainFX and Hilde Heyvaert

For those that aren't familiar with Metal Female Voices Fest (MFVF), it's a metal festival featuring only female fronted bands. It's been held in Belgium since 2003, and whilst it's currently on hold in Belgium, there was a Japanese edition earlier this year.

I had been wanting to organise an edition of MFVF held in Japan for many years. Seeing the festival had reached a certain level and popularity in Belgium, with people traveling to it from literally all over the world, it was really important to do this working with a professional organisation.

In 2018, I was introduced by a friend to *Yama-san*, the boss of *Evoken de Vallhal productions* (*EVP*): a metal organisation based in Tokyo. It was during his famous renowned event *Suomi Feast*, we had a chat about concerts and MFVF. We kept in touch as Yama-san was really interested in bringing the festival to Japan, as he had known about it for a long time.
Some months after I returned from my trip, he contacted me and sent me the info for the show in Tokyo. So, it was really happening!
This was my first collaboration with a promoter abroad, so it was necessary to keep a good communication altogether.



I contacted *Leaves' Eyes* and *Vuur* and introduced Yama-san to them as the local promoter of the festival. So, the headliners were already chosen. As MFVF is an international event, I suggested to him to get some extra support acts from abroad in addition to the local bands. That way, metal fans would have the opportunity to not just see the two international headliners and Japanese bands, but more foreign bands as well, making for a varied bill, and giving them the chance to see some acts they would probably never get to see on stage otherwise.

I didn't impose any bands on EVP, the lineup was 100% a collaboration between the both of us. Yama-san obviously knows the Japanese market and fans much better than I do, so we chose all other bands on the bill together in agreement. Whilst we were busy sorting out the line-up, a second date was added to the festival: one day it would be held in Tokyo, the other in Osaka. The line-up would remain largely the same, with exception of the local acts.

April arrived, and I embarked for the land of the rising sun. My headquarters were in Tokyo, so that I could distribute more promotion in bars and events with the help of the team of the *MFVF Japanese fan site*.

For the foreign bands it was the first time they would perform in Japan, and naturally they all wanted to do a bit of sightseeing. Alex from Leaves' Eyes asked me months prior to the event if I knew of some good spots to visit that were linked to samurai history. Therefore I arrived in Osaka two days prior to the festival so I could join them upon their arrival and take them on a tour as their guide. During those days we visited *Osaka castle*, the *love shrine* and Kyoto's samurai areas.
These visits were really important for the band to discover and learn more about Japanese culture and to meet local people and fans. They even signed autographs at Osaka castle and at *Mibu-dera*, the temple in Kyoto where the *Shinsengumi* (Shogunate police) had their headquarters during the *Edo* era.

On Saturday the 20th, we all reached the venue *Osaka Umeda amHall* early for the load-in. Japan is famous for its organisational efficiency… well, I can confirm that! I offered my help to help doing everything that needed doing, but the whole staff was fully organised. So, I had much more time to talk to the bands and visitors than I ever had in Belgium. I could even manage my own merch booth and take plenty of photos!

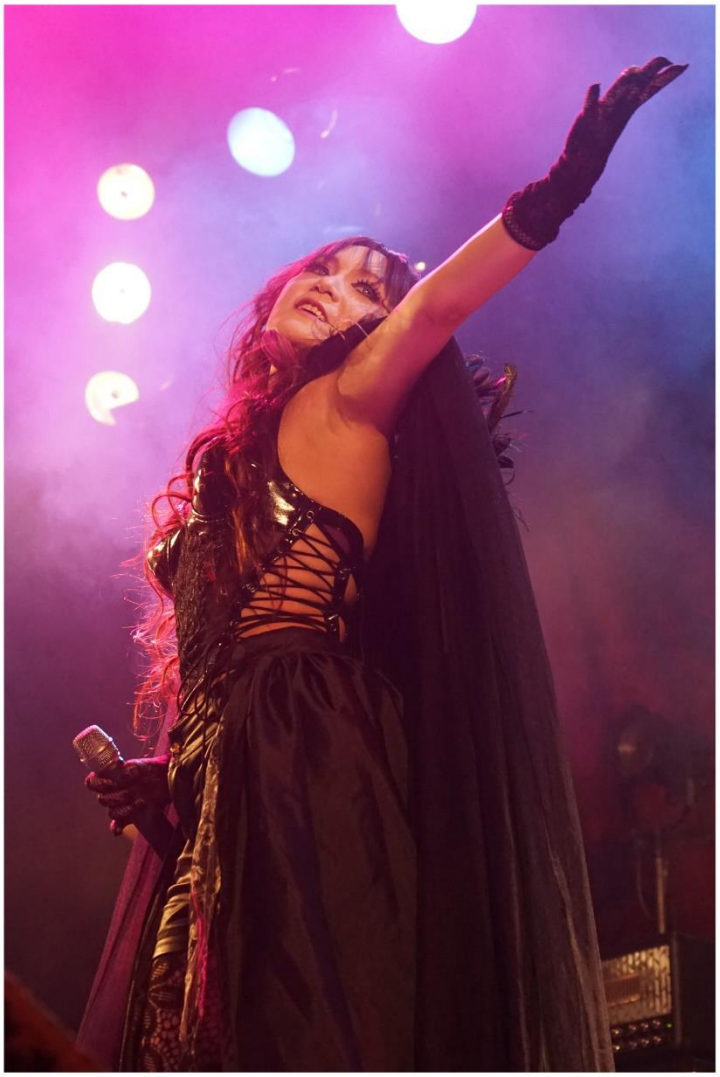
After the event, I went back to the hotel, I didn't go out with the guys as I had to wake up early. Yama-san had to finish the load-out at the venue during the night and was not sure to be on time to bring the other headliner Vuur to the train station. So, I took the train tickets with me just in case. But he managed to be on time so we reached Tokyo all together. Leaves' eyes left with the earlier train with an EVP staff member.

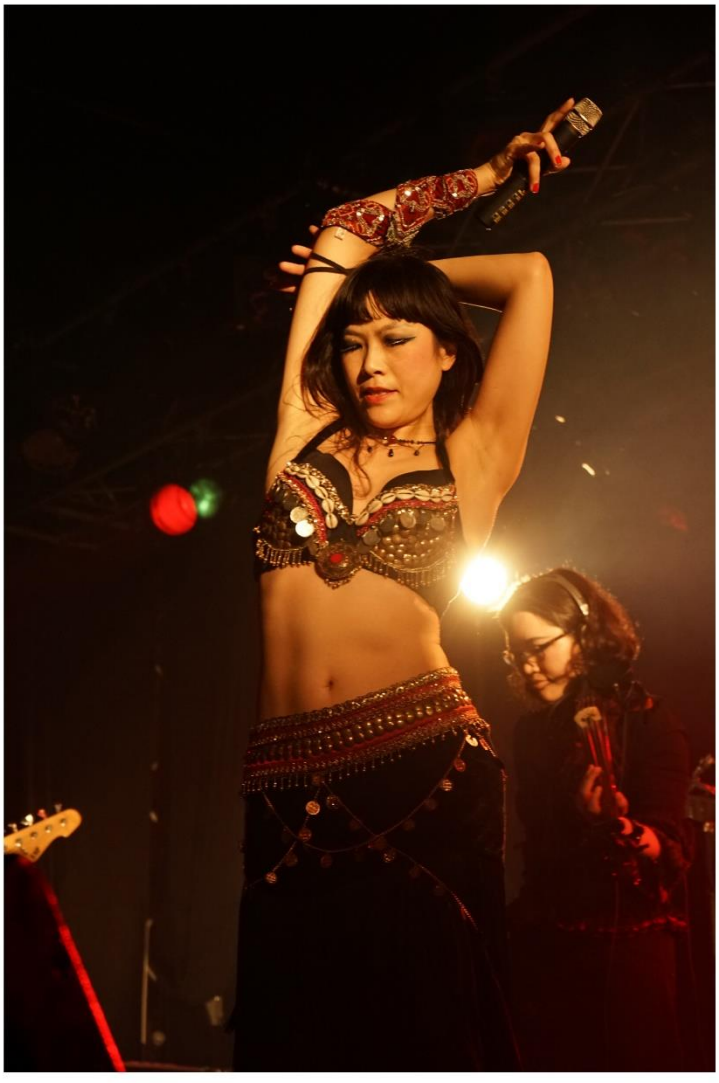
No time to rest, we directly headed to the *Shinjuku Blaze* live house and started the load-in. Like the previous day, everything was going smooth. On both days, EVP organised a VIP session for the lucky ones who got VIP tickets. In Tokyo, the 50 tickets were sold-out in 10 minutes! It was held before the doors opened, which was nice as the fans did not miss any band while getting autographs and photos.

The two festival days went by so fast. On each day, after the shows, I felt the joy and emotion of the Japanese fans. Even my friends who were not familiar with the MFVF concept came to me and told how much they enjoyed the event, they loved the bands and the atmosphere of the festival. For some it was reminding them of good memories from Belgium and for all others it was a dream come true. It was also amazing to see foreign visitors attending the event, such as Korean, Dutch, English and probably some others that I didn't know personally.

It brought me so much good vibes to hear positive comments, meet old friends again and make new ones. When everybody had to leave the venues, they were all a bit sad that it was ending so fast and all told me that they can't wait for a second edition.

I might have brought the name and concept to Japan, but EVP did a fantastic job making it happen. So, thank you so much Yama-san and the EVP staff!





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This is
Hallowe'en
AMUCK AMUCK
AMUCK

Hat, H&M. **Frames**, Theo. **T-shirt**, Walt Disney World - Mickey's Not So Scary Halloween Party. **Skirt**, handmade. **Petticoat**, Dear Celine. **Socks**, Insua. **Boots**, Palladium. **Bracelets**, handmade. **Bag**, Disney Store France.

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Hat, Thrifted/vintage. **Frames**, Theo. **Top**, Monki. **Necklace**, Freaks Circus **Skirt**, handmade. **Petticoat**, Dear Celine. **Socks**, HEMA. **Shoes**, sacha. **Bag**, Zatchel.

Hat, Thrifted/vintage. **Frames**, Theo. **Cardigan**, H&M. **Dress**, Monki. **Tights**, H&M. **Rainboots**, ASOS. **Brooch**, I Love Crafty x Pony People. **Umbrella**, Angelic Pretty. **Skull ring**, Moon Raven Designs. **Bat ring**, Poormans Gold Label.

Hat, ebay seller. **Frames**, Theo. **Top**, True Object. **Dress**, ASOS. **Long sleeved top**, Primark. **Socks**, UNIQLO. **Boots**, Palladium. **Bracelet**, Il Mezzometro.

Hat, Thrifted/vintage. **Frames**, Theo. **Top**, H&M. **Skirt**, handmade. **Petticoat**, American Apparel. **Socks**, HEMA. **Boots**, Kickers. **Bag**, Swimmer. **Bat ring**, Poormans Gold Label.

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Photographic impressions of
ICHIYO SAKURA MATSURI

The Edo Yoshiwara Oiran Dochu recreates the processions held back in the Edo Period.

Saturday, April 13; Akasuka, Tokyo, Japan

Photography by Helcanen

処方せん
ふれあい薬局

Phantom Manor, one of the most popular opening day attractions at *Disneyland Paris*, closed its doors on January 7th, 2018 for its longest refurbishment to date. The ride officially reopened on May 3rd, 2019 after experiencing several months of works and receiving various improvements and additions.

In order to celebrate the return of this classic ride, Disneyland Paris organized a reopening party on April 30th, 2019. At first, it was advertised word-for-word as a *Free Event exclusively for Infinity APs (annual passes) only* but, at the end of the day, it was more of a Press – *Insidears* (the Disneyland Paris approved influencers) event to which some *Infinity Passholders* and cast members were granted access. As far as we know, there were at least 1200 tickets available on the Infinity online platform and passholders could reserve only one ticket per annual pass. As for Insidears, most of them held some kind of contests to win two tickets meaning they received at least four tickets per media. We would be lying if we said we don't regret this lack of transparency which could have been easily avoided. On the top on that, the Infinity online platform experienced some bugs on the reservation day preventing many passholders from getting their ticket or being unsure whether they actually got it or not and therefore resulting in everyone being even more frustrated about the whole situation.

On D-Day, lucky passholders who did succeed in getting reservations had to go to the *Dôme Disney Village* to receive their wristband from 9am, purple ones for Infinity Passholders and green ones for Insidears. It seems that Disneyland Paris underestimated some of its fans' frustration because some of them took time to create fake wristbands in order to try to get access to the event. Cast members at the entrance had to check every wristband very meticulously to make sure they were original ones. Besides this unexpected thorough check, everything went quite smoothly as guests had to follow a pathway through the Discovery Arcade and were then guided by cast members.

At the entrance of Frontierland, cast members were there to welcome us by handing some newspapers out while shouting *Did you hear the news ? Phantom Manor is reopening!* in a enthusiastic way. We made our way to the *Molly Brown* deck in order to watch the first show of the evening. The Mayor of *Thunder Mesa* and his spouse, portrayed by Disneyland Paris Ambassadors, gave a speech in honor of the reopening of Phantom Manor and try to reassure their guests who might have been scared by the rumors and the quite unsure sheriff. At the end of the speech, we could hear some keys noises as the gatekeeper was trying to find the right key to open the manor while saying that *making us wait a few minutes more won't make any difference* as a private joke about this longer than expected refurbishment.

Most of the guests then headed to Phantom Manor, very impatient to try this new version. In addition, *Big Thunder Mountain* was also open but not altered in any specific way for this party and guests could also enjoy *Rustler Roundup Shootin' Gallery* exceptionally free of charge. We decided to walk around *Frontierland* to take some pictures of the land in this ghostly atmosphere. We had the opportunity to speak with some cast members as well, some Phantom Manor ride operators who shared their love for the ride with us and some comedians pretending to be residents of Thunder Mesa very happy to welcome guests in their town again.

Suddenly, a clock created by projection mapping appeared on the manor and a ticking sound started to echo through Thunder Mesa. The closer we got to midnight, the louder was the sound and the atmosphere heavier. When the clock finally stroke midnight, we could hear the Phantom Manor's bride *Melanie* complaining about her loneliness and moaning the good old days spent at her residence. The projections became more threatening showing us crows and thunder while Phantom Manor theme music was playing in Thunder Mesa. The tension went down once again before we started hearing another male voice; the Phantom himself. Our *(ghost) host* explained us that we would be always welcome at his manor as long as we do not approach Melanie. The projection show ended and we decided it was time to head to Phantom Manor. On our way, we met many residents we had talked to earlier in the evening but they were not as friendly. They totally changed their attitude, some were wandering aimlessly and others told us to escape while we still could. As we got closer to the manor, we realized that Melanie was walking in her garden. She didn't seem to be afraid but she looked lost and completely out of this world. We also heard a metallic noise and quickly understood that it came from a spade dragged on the ground and carried by Phantom himself to scare possible reckless guest who would dare to approach Melanie. It was definitely great to see those iconic ride characters coming to life especially in this well built atmosphere.

We finally made it to the ride but I won't be talking too much about it in order to avoid spoiler. The preshow in both the foyer and stretching room was quite different with new stunning effects and giving more advises about the storyline. We also noticed that Vincent Price's English narration was back as promised. The ride itself hasn't changed much but details have been added through the whole attraction to specify its backstory. In my opinion, even if some theories were confirmed by this new version, there are still some unexplained facts which will allow guests to create their own story and interpretation.

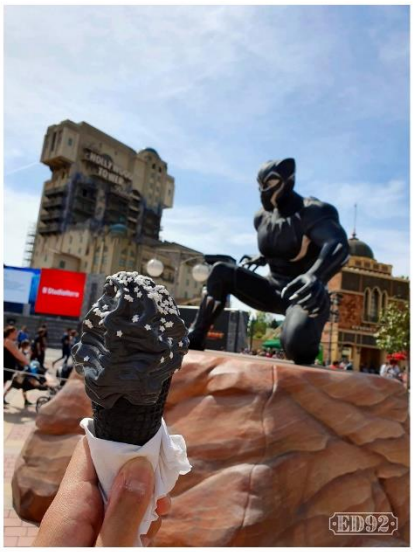
In conclusion, the only downsides of this event were the ticket reservation fail and the fact that the gap between passholders and Insidears became even more obvious. Their green wristbands gave them access to a privatized *Silver Spur Steakhouse* where they could enjoy drinks, food, photo walls and, most importantly, heating. Whilst we were left outside with nowhere to get warmer. Overall, we did have a great time at this ghostly event. We felt like we were actual parts of a story and experienced it from the inside thanks to character wandering around. We felt it was definitely better than untiringly queuing for hours in order to get one single picture. We strongly hope this kind of themed events will happen again in the future.

Review and photography by Marie Huberty.

Photographic impressions of
MARVEL SEASON OF SUPERHEROES

March 23 - June 16, Walt Disney Studios Park, Disneyland Paris, Marne-la-Vallée, France

Photography by ED92 and Disneyland Paris



Photographic impressions of
FREE COMIC BOOK DAY

Free comics, free ice cream, free candy, geek drinks, a DJ, all sorts of entertainment, ...
Saturday, May 4, Mekanik Strip, Antwerp, Belgium

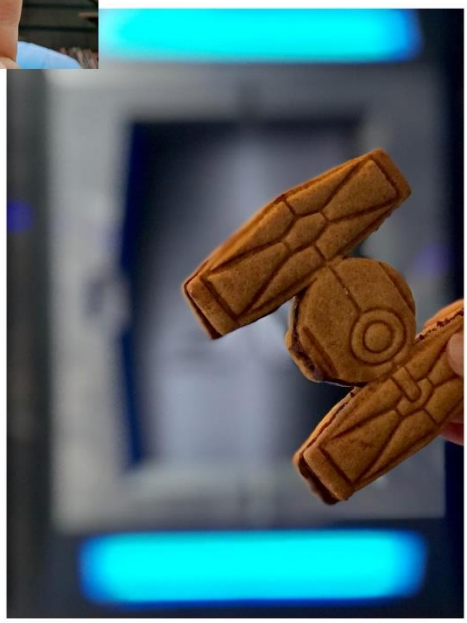
Photography by Hilde Heyvaert

FREE COMIC BOOK DAY

Photographic impressions of
MAY THE 4TH AT DISNEYLAND PARIS

Discoveryland, Disneyland Park, Disneyland Paris, Marne-la-Vallée, France

Photography by ED92 and Disneyland Paris



Event: Comic Con Gent
What: pop culture convention
When: May 4 & 5 2019
Where: ICC, Ghent, Belgium
Ticket price: varied, depending on the formula
Website: www.comiccongent.com

Comic Con Gent is the convention it all started out with for this crew, but despite the overwhelming size and attendance level of its big brother *Comic Con Brussels*, *CCG* has remained a cosy and relaxed, much smaller event, and that's totally fine. We visited on the Sunday of the event, so the review will be solely focussed on that day.

This year, the convention was a little smaller than last year, which was a shame as it had less little nooks and crannies to find amazing things in, but nevertheless, it was a good and varied set-up.

A convention isn't a convention without a dealer room, and whilst this one was a little smaller than last year's, you could still find a good variety of things: ranging from the latest craze, to an abundance of *Funko* (a staple for every convention these days), some Jfashion items, candy and mead stands and the like. Sadly, and this isn't limited to Comic Con events, you see the same sellers more and more often at every event, which has it's pros and cons. The cons are of course that it's getting harder to find merch you haven't seen before, or find things you are looking for that aren't that easy to get. The pro is that if you've seen something one con and haven't bought it, there's at least a chance you'll be able to find it at the next event, provided someone else hasn't snapped it up first. But overall, we would say that there was a fair variety of things to buy at Comic Con Gent.

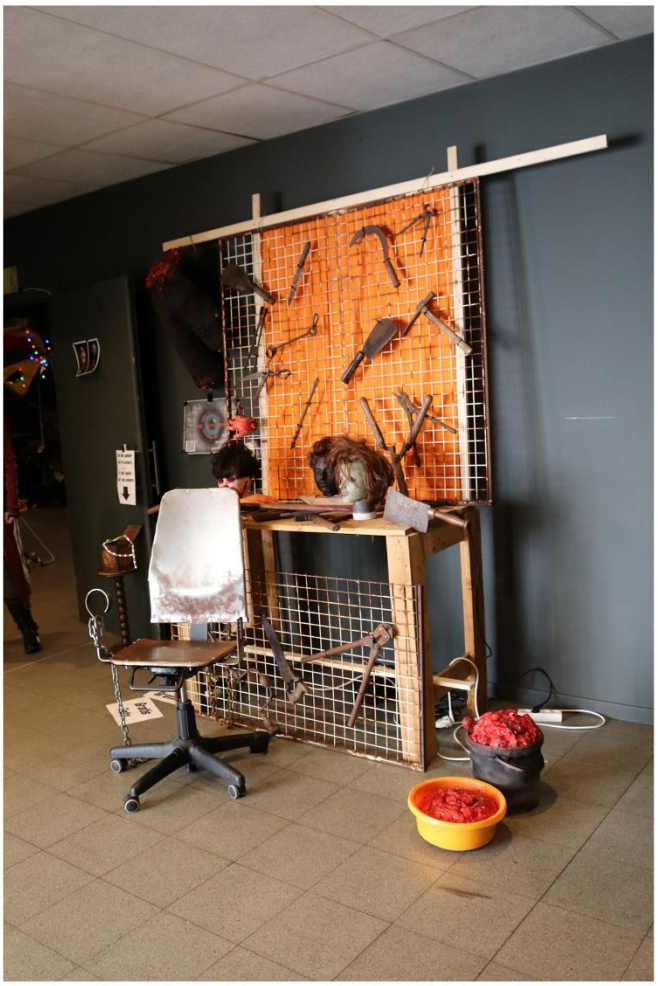
If you hadn't brought your own food and drink, you could get a few things on site, ranging from mochi ice cream, taiyaki, fries and the usual or take a short walk to the nearby supermarket, which is also open on Sunday.

As usual there were a fair few guests you could meet, collect autographs from or have a photo taken with (for an added fee, as per usual), and even though this is a smaller convention, there were a few bigger names on the bill, which is always fun.
The additional photo opportunities at the horror stand and Thor's hammer Mjölnir were also fun elements.

The stage area was really well done this year, with comfortable lounge space in front of it, and set-up in a way so you could see the stage from pretty much the entire upstairs hall.

All in all, Comic Con Gent was an excellent smaller brother to Comic Con Brussels, and it offers a nice reprieve for people that love cosplaying and
conventions, but don't want to be in big crowds such as can be found at Comic Con Brussels, *FACTS* or *Made in Asia*. It's nice to see that successful small cons are still a thing. And it's a great warm up for Belgium's next pop culture convention: Comic Con Antwerp in September.

eview and photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.
Photo page by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.



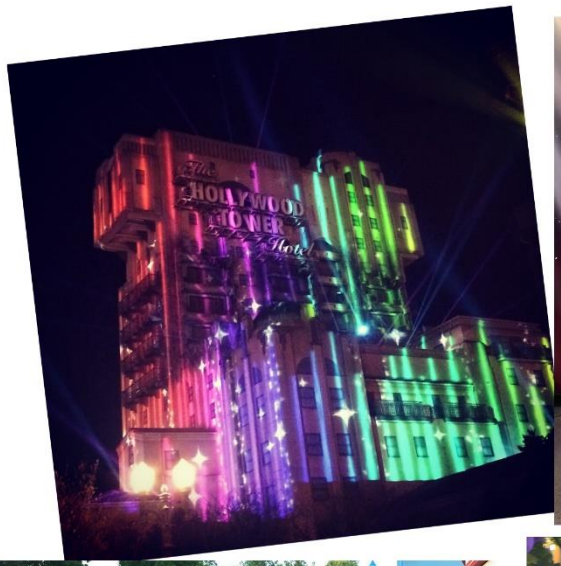
PIKACHU

STAR WARS
REBEL FIGHTERS!!!!

Photographic impressions of MAGICAL PRIDE AT DISNEYLAND PARIS

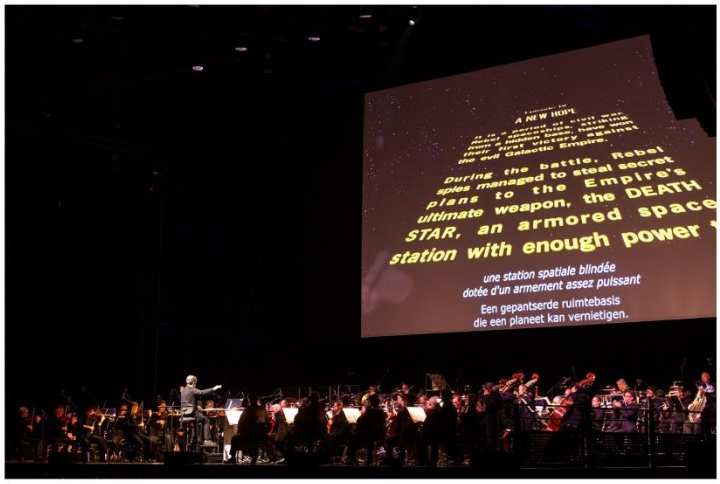
Saturday, June 1; Walt Disney Studios Park, Disneyland Paris, Marne-la-Vallée, France

Photography by ED92 and Disneyland Paris



Photographic impressions of
STAR WARS IN CONCERT:
A NEW HOPE

Saturday, June 8; Palais 12 of Brussels Expo, Laeken, Belgium

Photography by Benjamin Miesse

Event: The Lion King and Jungle Festival
What: summer event at Disneyland Paris
When: June 30 - September 22 2019
Where: Disneyland Park, Disneyland Paris, Marne-la-Vallée, France
Ticket price: very, very varied; depending on the formula
Website: www.disneylandparis.com

For the first time *Disneyland Paris* has organised *The Lion King and Jungle Festival* for the summer. Focussing on, you guessed it: *The Lion King* and *The Jungle Book*. With the African and Indian vibes, this is definitely a perfect choice for the Disneyland Paris summer season.

As is Disneyland Paris (DLP) tradition, they have special events in both on ticket and add-on events. For an additional fee, you can meet *Minnie Mouse* in her explorer outfit, enjoy lunch at *Hakuna Matata* with *Mickey* in his explorer outfit and *Rafiki*, and get priority seating for the *The Lion King: Rhythms of the Pride Lands* show at *Frontierland Theatre*. In my opinion, its only worth it if you really enjoy all of the above (especially as there were some issues getting a time slot fixed for the Minnie meet). Frankly, there are so many characters in special outfits in the overall event, DLP should at least make one available to the general public. They can make it work during the Halloween season, so I don't see why they can't make it work the rest of the year.

What they did make work, however, were the shows. Both *The Jungle Book Jive* and Rhythms of the Pride Lands are excellent performances, well worth seeing at least once. If you can stand the heat on boiling hot days at least, because Disneyland Paris may have put in some effort on the hottest day of July, the rest of the heatwave days, guests and employees alike are pretty much on their own. Considering the wait in the blistering heat necessary to get a good view for either show, that's not on, and something they need to improve on. So if you go to Disneyland Paris on a hot day, bring sunblock, make sure you have enough to drink, and bring your own shelter (parasol, giant sun hat, whatever works) because you don't have to count on DLP to provide it for you. If you think you have heat stroke or a bad sunburn, go to the 1st aid, it's there for a reason after all.

Speaking of The Jungle Book Jive, combining a parade into a show (which isn't new as they do it with *Make Your Choice* of *Pirates and Princesses* as well) is definitely a great choice. If you just want to see the floats, you can find a spot alongside *Main Street USA*. If you want to see the actual show, find a stage on *Central Plaza*, as its split three ways. You will still see the floats too, which was great. And if you just want to see the day fireworks (with smoke rather than fire), you can find a spot with view on the castle along the curb. Very well set-up indeed.

If it its not too hot, and you feet like dancing, you can try to join *Timon's MataDance* over in *Adventureland*. Organisation wise, it is often a little hit or miss, but it is a fun little thing nonetheless. And participants receive a free button. The only other way to receive a button (a different one, though) is to stay on site in one of the resort hotels. Meaning that these are probably racking up quite the price on ebay for collectors, but there you go.

Finally, near *Frontierland Theatre*, they have set up a small village called *Djembe Joy*. If you are looking for the souvenir cup, this is the place to be. Other than a concession stand, a merch stand and a stage area where they teach percussion classes four times a day, there isn't that much to it. But it was a nice addition in any case, and definitely something DLP should keep up for their other seasonal events.

Another nice addition was pulling the festival through to *Disney Village*. The stage there was decorated on theme, you could buy some of the merch and they had a few roaming characters on theme of The Jungle Book to interact with guests. These are all really nice additions, especially as you don't even need a ticket to enter the Village.

Having finally taken a leaf out of the Asian park's books, DLP has provided a range of themed foods. All pretty pricy, but definitely good for the gram. The themed merch was also a good range of things, so they are definitely on the way up when it comes to things like this. Bring your own bag though, because DLP no longer gives out free plastic bags, and the ones you can purchase for €1 or 2, are not as eco friendly as you would think (check last edition's eco column for more on that). Not all stores sell the same thing, so it's best to not buy 'till you've been able to have a gander in several stores.

The real strength of this, is the fact that even if you aren't a fan of either of the movies featured in the event, you can still enjoy it. The Lion King and Jungle Festival really felt like a cohesive event. Sure there are some glitches. Sure, some things really needed to be improved upon. Such as dealing with the heat on hot summer days, accessibility for people with a disability was still not the way it should have been, and actually booking meet and greet times didn't go as smoothly as it could have. But overall, it really felt like DLP was finally getting their act together, bit by bit, when it comes to large scale events that cover most of one park. Hopefully they'll keep on improving on them so they can go on with minimal glitches like those in other Disney parks already do.

Review by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert. With imput of Marie Huberty.
Photography by ED92, Hilde Heyvaert, Marie Huberty and Bert Van den Wyngaert.
Photo pages by Hilde Heyvaert, Mary Huberty and Bert Van den Wyngaert.

Event: Summer Geek Festival
What: pop culture convention
When: June 29 & 30 2019
Where: Lotto Mons Expo, Mons, Belgium
Ticket price: varied, depending on the formula
Website: www.summergeekfestival.be

For their second edition *Summer Geek Festival* moved to the *Mons Lotto Expo*. We weren't present for their first edition, so we can't compare venues. We also visited the event on Saturday, so the review will focus on that day only.

The day of the event was smack in the middle of a heatwave, and whilst they did their best, the temperature inside was still pretty bad. That was one thing, but the main issue with the summer acting up was the fact that they saw it fit to put several food vendors outside in the blistering heat. Food trucks being outside a venue is nothing new, but if you have a queue that easily goes over half an hour, at least put up some parasols to protect people instead of making them line up in bleak sun. That's just asking for trouble. The safety around the bouncy castle was something people were talking about, but frankly, it is up to the parents to mind their children, especially with the possibility of cars nearby. It can be argued that a better, safer, spot could have been found for it, but ultimately, it is up to the adults accompanying the children to make sure they don't run off.

Speaking of children, SGF was really geared to be an all ages event, with wide lanes that could accommodate not only prams, but also wheelchairs. Even if it had been a lot more crowded than it was, mobility was something they kept in mind very well.

The summer theme was very persistent throughout the entire event, with fun pool and beach décor all over, and the stages were some of the cheeriest we have ever seen. The staff was friendly and accommodating, and they did their best to make the event as varied as possible. Despite being such a small and new convention, they did a really good job. Not just were there a large amount of different items for sale, ranging from American drinks and sweets to children's books, Japanese kitchenware, the usual Funko and assorted geek stuff, to mead, candy and all sorts of pop culture and fantasy times, they also had a slushie stand, a large streaming stage, a small art expo, tech try-outs, cosplay events and concerts: geek bands and Jrock alike. Meaning they did just as well, and in some cases even better, than a lot of bigger and more established conventions.

There were several picnic tables set up to eat food, and for the amount of visitors, we would say the amount of seating was about right. Especially seeing you could also find other seating throughout the convention in front of other stages. If you hadn't brought your own food, and due to food restrictions couldn't eat at the convention, or simply didn't want to queue in the bleak sunshine for mediocre fries or spend €6 on a slushie, there's a mall opposite the venue that has a large supermarket as well as café's and other places that serve food. So when it comes to food, they've got that covered as well due to proximity to alternatives, as well as having a very decent offer on site for such a small convention.

There was amble parking, and unlike a lot of other conventions, you could still park for free within very easy walking distance to the venue. This definitely makes for a very nice change.

If you speak French well enough to be able to enjoy an event in the language, and prefer your conventions a bit smaller and less crowded, this is definitely one to keep an eye on. It's also bi-annual, with a winter edition, Winter Geek Festival, coming up in December.

eview and photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.
Photo page by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.

GEEK SHOW

Pridragon et les Dragonuls

Event: Elftopia
What: fantasy fair
When: August 10 & 11 2019
Where: Ooidonk Castle grounds, Deinze, Belgium
Ticket price: varied; depending on the formula
Website: www.elftopia.be

Elftopia fantasy fair has grown during its 4 years into an event that can easily compete with other big events of the same nature. Including the famous *Elfia* and *Castlefest* held in The Netherlands. Which is great, because now we don't have to travel abroad for a good fantasy faire anymore! We went on the Sunday of the event, so this review is about our impressions of that day specifically.

Ok sure, it has the same elements as most other fantasy fairs, and quite a few: it's held on the grounds of a castle, there's tons of see and do, plenty of areas to take amazing photos in and of, and an incredibly varied programme. You can go shopping, meet the guests (autographs and photos at extra cost, as usual), participate in one of the many workshops, see mermaids swim in the moat, listen to a band or other show on stage, play laser tag in part of the forest, etc. There's a reason the all day long activities take up a good chunk of an A4 program page. There's really that many to choose from.

The good thing about shopping at Elftopia is that aside from the pop culture stuff you can find at pretty much every other convention, there are also vendors selling very specific merchandise geared to fantasy affectionados and LARPers. Meaning that you can at least find things you don't normally see for sale offline. Which especially great if you're looking for specific parts, especially leatherwork and armour, for outfits or costumes.

Elftopia counts two stages, the *Alphabet stage* and the *Elftopia stage*, offering things you have come to expect such as bands and Q&As, but also slam poetry, Disney karaoke, storytelling, stand-up comedy and more. If its not your thing, it's never at the kind of volume that makes it unavoidable and the grounds are more than large enough to enjoy yourself nowhere near either podium.

As Elftopia takes place on castle grounds, and many of those are comprised of fields, it can be a little bit difficult to navigate if you have limited mobility, but the organisation has done its best to make passageways as wide as possible to allow for the best possible access. There were quite a few seating areas near the larger drinks and food hubs, so to speak, but for the rest people mostly sat in the grass or on seats they brought themselves. Seeing the weather was great the weekend of Elftopia, that was not an issue what so ever, but we do wonder about seating and shelter when the weather goes bad. Which is the nature of this kind of event, really.

Food wise there was a fair variety of food trucks. There's also at least one place in town in walking distance from the event where you can get a meal. Just like with all other events by this crew, you are allowed to bring your own food, so if you rather not spend your cash on something to eat, you can pack your own meals.

My only gripe is the toilets, which remain a port-a-potty kind of dubious hygiene, if there is any kind of hygiene involved at all. Which is sadly a malaise at fantasy fairs and festivals in general. Basically, bring a roll of toilet paper and a pack of wet wipes and you should be good, provided you don't think about the loo you're using too much (the chance of you catching something is minimal, they're just gross).

The strength of Elftopia is undoubtedly its varied programme, making it nearly impossible to be bored at the fair. There is so much to see and do that you'd have to put in an actual effort to be bored. We are absolutely excited to see how they will turn this around for their horror variant of the event, *Helltopia,* on October 26th! If you're looking for a pre-Halloween thing to go to, definitely at least give this one a consideration because if its anything like Elftopia, it will be worth the ticket. And it shouldn't be overly creepy before the evening, so there's that as well if you like your frights on the lite side.

Review by Bert Van den Wyngaert. Photography by Hilde Heyvaert.

COMIC CON
Antwerp
14-15 SEPTEMBER 2019
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WAAGNATIE, ANTWERPEN

Fall
Fashion

Hat, vintage. **Goggles**, handmade. **Scarf**, vintage. **Fake fur stole**, H&M. **Blouse**, H&M. **Harness**, AliExpress seller. **Waistcoat**, vintage. **Skirt**, Souffle Song. **Tights**, Veritas. **Shoes**, Wolky. **Wristcuffs**, Summer Tales Boutique. **Gloves**, vintage. **Other accessories**, Les Racines.

Hat, H&M. **Frames**, Theo. **Scarf**, H&M. **Top**, Monki. **Dress**, Monki. **Tights**, Sonia Rykiel x H&M. **Shoes**, ASOS.

Hat, thrifted. **Blouse**, Fan+Friend. **Corset**, Vintage Goth. **Lanterns**, Ikea. **Dress, brooch, hand jewelry**, handmade. **Boots**, thrifted.

Hat, Disney Parks. **Frames**, Theo. **Scarf**, ASOS. **Cardigan**, Primark. **Dress**, handmade. **Petticoat**, Dear Celine. **Leggings**, Primark. **Boots**, Palladium. **Bag**, Bioworld. **Brooches**, Disney Parks.

Goggles, So Yesterday Things. **Shrug**, handmade. **Dress**, H&M. **Underskirt**, Metamorphose. **Corset**, Vintage Goth. **Socks**, Ergi by Piratessan. **Boots**, model's own. **Brooches**, handmade, Doriel Design. **Other accessories**, model's own.

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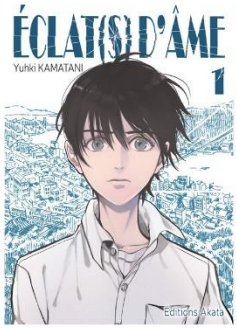
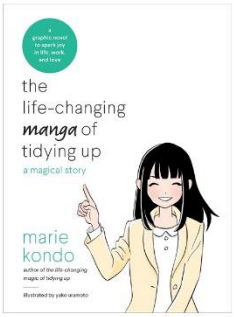


Yuhki Kamatani
"Eclat(s) d'âme"
"Shimanami Tasogare"

High school student *Tasuku Kaname* contemplates suicide after being outed as gay by a classmate. As he considers his fate, he meets a mysterious woman who refuses to give him her name. She introduces him to the local LGBTQ+ community, which meets up at a building she owns. One by one, Tasuku gets to know its members, and discovers he's not alone in his struggles.
As a member of the community, *Yuhki Kamatani* (the author defines as X gender, the Japanese term for non-binary) does a wonderful job at portraying the many facets of the LGBTQ+ world. Kamatani ignores the typical yuri/yaoi tropes for which manga is known, and instead treats every character as a unique individual with a story worth telling, including characters with lesser-known queer identities such as asexuality or those who are still questioning. While the story carries an optimistic tone, it does not shy away from heavier topics such as suicide ideation, transphobia, or harmful behaviour within the community.
The art in *Eclat(s) d'âme* is beautiful, and experiments with creative viewpoints which give the manga a cinematic feel. Kamatani uses effective visual metaphors to showcase what emotions characters are currently experiencing, giving this series an extra artistic layer. Every character also has their own distinct facial features, which breathe a sense of individuality into them that a lot of other manga lack.
Eclat(s) d'âme was originally published in *HiBaNa* and on the *Manga One* app. The series has been published in French by *Éditions Akata*. If you enjoyed Akata's earlier release of *Gengoro Tagame's Le Mari de mon Frère*, you will enjoy this title, too. *Seven Seas Entertainment* is currently working on an English translation, bearing the title *Our Dreams at Dusk*.



Marie Kondo and
Yuko Uramoto
"The Life-Changing Manga of Tidying Up"
"Manga de yomu jinsei ga tokimeku katazuke no mahou"

Chiaki, a slovenly young woman who lives in Tokyo, has trouble getting both her love life and her messy apartment in order. After her attractive but cleanliness-loving neighbour complains about the mess on her balcony, Chiaki decides to get help from organising guru *Marie Kondo* to fix her problems. Ever wanted to try the *KonMari* method to clean out your clutter, but don't feel like reading the book? You might find this manga to be more to your liking. It introduces the basics of Kondo's organising techniques through a cute little slice-of-life story. While Chiaki's tale is far from memorable, you'll find yourself rereading this book multiple times nonetheless, most likely while tidying a room and wondering what step to take next. If you've already read Kondo's *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, you won't find anything new in this comic. Ironically, the art of this manga is rather messy due to the shaky line art and lack of clean-up of inking flaws. Despite its problems, the simple art style complements the story and the KonMari method well. The pages in which the art is crucial, like those where the KonMari folding techniques are explained for example, are easy to follow.
The Life-Changing Manga of Tidying Up was originally published by *Sunmark Publishing*. The manga has been translated into English by *Ten Speed Press*, French by *Kurokawa*, Dutch by *Lev.*, Italian by *Vallardi*, Spanish by *Aguilar*, Polish by *Muza*, and German by *Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag*.

Miyako Maki
"Les Femmes du Zodiaque"
"Seiza no Onna"

Les Femmes du Zodiaque is an anthology series which consists of twelve short stories. Each tale revolves around a heroine who represents a different sign of the zodiac. This series explores the position of women in Japanese society, ranging from the *Meiji period* until the 1970's. The genres portrayed within this manga offer the reader a wide variety of tales, ranging from psychological thrillers, historical dramas, to even a romantic comedy. These style switches never feel jarring, and prove *Maki*'s skill as a flexible storyteller. Maki also spends a lot of time fleshing out the psychological dimensions of the characters, and does it well. Unsurprising given its age, the art style of Les Femmes du Zodiaque is steeped in a distinct seventies atmosphere. This goes even for those stories that make use of historical settings, rather than the contemporary world in which they were drawn. When it comes to line work, Maki exceeds in elegance, and knows exactly how to make the most of her black-and-white setting. Every page offers a perfect balance between texture and empty space. Whenever the story demands it, Maki does not shy away from eroticism, but it never feel vulgar or out of place. *Miyako Maki* is known as the first woman to draw *gekiga*, or adult literary manga. As such, Les Femmes du Zodiaque makes for a fascinating read for those interested in manga history. While this comic was revolutionary for its portrayal of female sexuality at the time of its original publication, it contains certain views that many consider outdated today. As always when reading older works, please keep in mind the historical and cultural context in which this manga was drawn when judging its contents.
Les Femmes du Zodiaque was originally serialised in *Josei jishin*. It has been published in French by *Le Lézard Noir* and in Spanish by *Satori Manga*. Please note that the first volume of the French edition contains one misplaced page due to a printing error.

Reviews by Lora-Elly Vannieuwenhuysen. Imagery all official promo materials.

Fruits Basket (2019)
anime

When high school student *Tohru Honda* finds herself homeless, her classmate *Yuki Sohma* offers for her to move in with him and his cousin *Shigure*. Tohru soon discovers the Sohma family carries a dark secret: whenever they are hugged by someone of the opposite sex, they change into an animal of the Chinese zodiac. Made in a similar vein as *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood*, *Fruits Basket* is a remake of the 2001 classic shoujo anime by the same name. The 2001 Fruits Basket anime ends halfway of the original plot due to the manga not being finished yet at the time of its production. This new series, which is supervised by mangaka *Natsuki Takaya*, will include the full story, and loyally follows the manga almost panel by panel. The animation has received a major make-over, which is a huge improvement on the original show. The original voice acting cast has been replaced, too: while some may miss *Yui Horie* as Tohru, *Iwami Manaka* does a great job filling her shoes. Especially *Nobunaga Shimazaki* deserves praise for his portrayal of Yuki, who feels much more fleshed out thanks to this voicing change. Regardless of whether you're an old fan or new to Tohru's tales, this remake deserves a watch.

Saint Seiya:
Knights of the Zodiac Season 1
anime
Available on Netflix
In theory at last because at the time I wrote this, it was no longer available in Belgium.

Netflix has decided to do a remake of cult classic *Saint Seiya*, and I'm still wondering why the heck they bothered. First of all, the animation style is utterly rubbish. the Japanese language track isn't available in all regions (I had to suffer through the English one), and whilst the voice work is adequate, it's frankly, a clusterfuck. Whilst changing up the story a little, adding new villains into the storyline, isn't a bad one, the execution is. They have condensed a whole story arc of the original manga and anime into only 6 short episodes, making it super rushed and end abruptly. If you are new to the franchise, you will probably be left with far more questions than you should have. If you're a returning fan, you will likely spit soot. Whilst in the original anime, a lot of time was spent on the background of each principal character, they now gloss over it, it's still fine for a new viewer, but someone that knows the franchise will be annoyed, AF. The worst part of this entire endeavour is the name changes. Apart from the titular Seiya and a few others, nearly all the lead characters have been renamed. Oh and *Andromeda Shun*, a character celebrated for his androgenous nature and femininity in an era where non-binary wasn't really talked about is now, you guessed it: female. Because we just have to add a token girl to the club! Especially when they on a pink armour! And she's called *Shaun*. *Cignus Hyoda* is now *Magnus,* Dragon *Shiryu* is now *Lon*, *Phoenix Ikki* is now *Nero* and *Saori* is now *Sienna*. Luckily, we are spared of this BS in the Japanese language version, so if you have that available to you, you are very lucky indeed. Frankly, this entire remake is a waste of time and money. If you're into Saint Seiya, watch the original anime. If you want to get into Saint Seiya, still watch the original anime. The original anime is a total cheesefest, but in the most excellent way, a quality the remake is definitely missing.

Sword Gai the animation
Season 2
anime
Available on Netflix

Whilst season 1 of the *Sword Gai* anime kicked off very strong, and left us wanting for more, season 2 sadly didn't continue the same high standard. Whilst the plot continues to unfold, and character development continues from the past season, it way events unfold has become very chaotic and long winding. A lot of questions are kind of left unanswered and there is rather a lot of focus on side characters, who are given an entire arc that then just kind of vanishes without any form of conclusion. A lot of events are also left ill-explained, meaning that the second season wasn't anywhere as good as it could have been. It's a shame to see such a good anime end on such a low note, but it is how it is.

Ultraman
anime
Available on Netflix

Ultraman is dead, long live Ultraman. Or you know, his son at least. Who is as attractive a character as the more unpopular ones from Game of Thrones. The new series of Ultraman is not just a revival of the original show, it is also a continuation. And not a very good one. Instead of the original live action series from the 1960s, it is now animated. Badly. The animation style would have benefited much more from traditional animation rather than this mostly computer generated approach. The storyline is slow, and unoriginal and we feel that it just doesn't live up to the hype. In fact, with an anime this shite, I don't even get why there IS a hype in the first place!
Available on Netflix

Reviewers by Hilde Heyvaert and Lora-Elly Vannieuwenhuysen. All imagery is official promo material.

Madmans Esprit

Le Garage Creative Music, Liège, Belgium
Sunday, April 28 2019

That Korean visual kei band *Madman's Esprit* has quite the following in Europe was very clear. A small crowd had been forming outside of the *Garage* a few hours before the start, and seldom have we seen the venue as full as it was for Madman's Esprit.
Support acts *VII ARC* and *–post* were well enough received, but it was quite obvious people were there for the headliner and went pretty crazy when the band finally hit the stage

Madman's Esprit is the kind of band you love or hate, and clearly, a lot of people love them. Personally, their music isn't my style, but it is well performed, they have really thought out their stage show, and they are obviously talented musicians. Meaning that if you're into the band, you will be presented with a show that is more than worth the ticket price you paid to see them.

One thing I did notice and do want to make clear: shoving photographers is a bad idea, not only is it rude, it also makes that there are far less, if any, good photos for you to enjoy after the show. So don't do it, if only because the bill you'll be served with if a professional camera breaks will probably run into the thousands of €.
Don't be a twat
/end of story.

Review by Hilde Heyvaert. Photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert.

the GazettE

WORLD TOUR 19 THE NINTH PHASE #04 -99.999-

It had been about 3 years since *the GazettE*'s last world tour when the iconic visual-kei band decided it was high time to come back on the international roads to introduce their latest album *NINTH*.

The tour was divided into 3 different parts; the 1st one in May for North and South America, the 2nd in early June for Europe and the 3rd one in late June for Asia. The old continent hosted 4 concerts in England, France and Germany and I was lucky enough to attend 3 of those (London, Paris and Cologne).

NINTH has a much darker tone than some previous the GazettE albums while also showcasing their J-rock side. It was quite obvious that NINTH has been built for live concerts and it definitely worked. Comparing with other tours I had the opportunity to attend, I noticed some huge changes in the kind of audience attending the concerts and realized this new the Gazette could now even win over metal aficionados who might not know about visual-kei.

All of the 3 concerts' set-list inevitably featured new songs from NINTH along with recent hits such as *UGLY* or *INSIDE BEAST*. Some older songs such as *SUICIDE CIRCUS* and *SHIVER* or even *AGONY* were played for the fans' delight and the classic quintessential the GazettE song *Filth in the Beauty* was part of every concert set-list. The calm part of the live was always the NINTH ballad *その声は脆く* (*Sono Koe ha Morocco*) which sounded particularly way more touching in live. All concerts were ended with the band new hymn *TOMORROW NEVER DIES* which I personally regret as I would have loved to hear UNFINISHED live.

Overall, the band is still rocking the visual-kei stage while starting to conquer new horizons. We would definitely advise anyone who were fans of their old materials or even newbie discovering their atmosphere to attend one of their concert in order to realize how far they had come.

On the downside, I would love to see a proper tour manager organise their next tour as the 3 lines (VIP, *Heresy* Fanclub members and general admis sion) were poorly managed at every location ending up in fans not getting what they actually paid for and even being harassed by local staff members. the GazettE, please hear us out and, more importantly, come back soon!

Review and photography by Marie Huberty.

INORAN

"2019"
Full album
Genre: rock

2019 is the kind of album you listen to and it'll put you in a good mood and make you happy. INORAN has moved away, somewhat, from his original shoegazing roots, even though you can definitely hear that signature sound of his on 2019.
Overall 2019 is a much more accessible record than some of his previous releases, without becoming a commercial sell-out. If you like rock music, give this a listen, you will not be disappointed.

Review by Hilde Heyvaert.

Satsuki

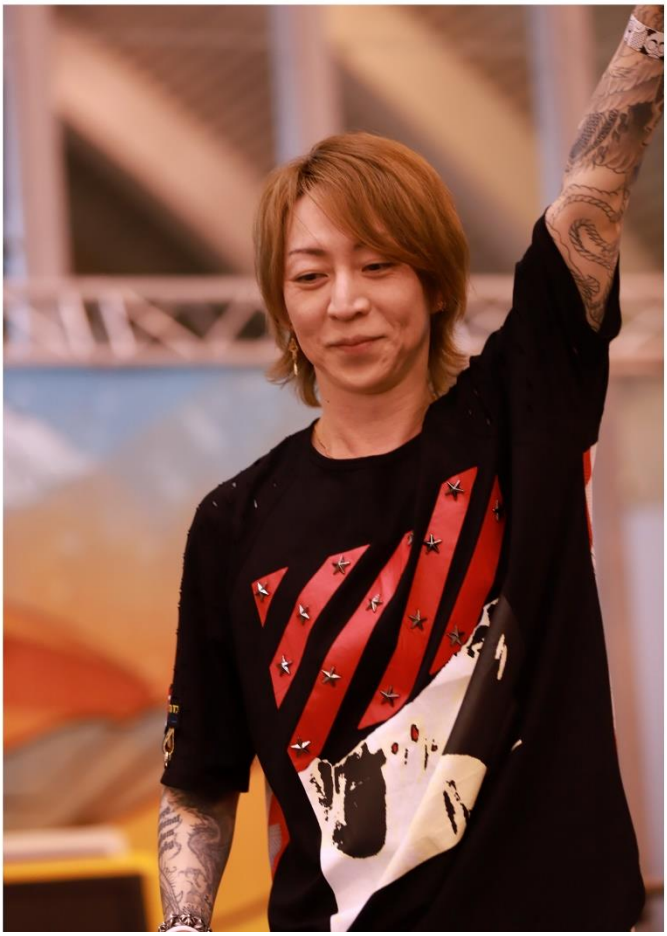
- Be Yourself - 10th anniversary tour
Summer Geek Festival
Lotto Mons Expo
Saturday, June 29 2019

Satsuki is a well-loved guest on the European stages, and a lot of fans look forward to his nearly annual EU tour.
This time, his 10th anniversary tour, Be Yourself, ended with two concerts at *Summer Geek Festival*. Even though it was a quiet convention on a blistering summer day, quite a few people had gathered in front of the stage to witness the concert, and a lot more of them had sat down at the nearby picnic tables to watch the live from there.
And each of every one of them was into it.
Satsuki talked to the crowd and his interactions were definitely something they appreciated, and as it was a pop culture event, he had adjusted his set-list to that, so that old and new fans alike could really enjoy it to the fullest. It was a really good mix of his own material, as well as classic anime tunes that even people not that into anime recognised.
Satsuki is clearly a seasoned performer, and it shows from the ease he takes the stage, his energy and how quickly people will become a fan, even after just having a curious glance at what's happening on stage.

set-list

Twilight
Attack On
REBOOT
YOU
FREEDOM
La Luna
SYMPATHY
ROMANCE
ARTEMIS
Lily

Review by Hilde Heyvaert. Photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert.



Ichion

A Summer Day in Japan - Le Garage Matsuri
Le Garage Creative Music, Liège, Belgium
Saturday, July 13 2019

Japanese band Ichion was definitely novel. With their dark, nearly impossible to photograph or film, stage show with minimal neon lighting and dark, almost industrial, Gothic music, they are definitely a love it or hate it kind of band. I am absolutely into it, and could definitely stand to see them live more often. That said, however, it is definitely a very niche ensemble. If you're into dark, alternative music. Give them a go next time they're in Europe. Theire music is probably best compared to French Gothic band Rosa†Crvx, if I must compare them to someone.

Review and photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert

Ekotumi

Le Garage Matsuri
Le Garage Creative Music, Liège, Belgium
Saturday, July 13 2019

Ekotumi has been gracing European stages, mainly at *Japan Expo*, for the past five years. For the first time, people in Belgium were able to catch her live on stage in Liège.
Let us tell you, it was totally worth it.

Combining storytelling, spoken word, theatre, opera, vocals, dance and Japanese mythology, Ekotumi weaves stories in English and Japanese to bring people closer to Japanese ancestry, history and folklore.

Even though it's just her and a pianist, she draws in the crowd effortlessly from the very first note to the very last. The combination of her voice, body language and slightly modernised traditional Japanese fashion is an almost magical presentation and whilst it has a lot of potential to be very gimmicky, for her it absolutely works.
Even in the low light, small concert room of *Le Garage*, Ekotumi managed to enchant the crowd with her performance. If you get to see her live, do it, the chance of you being disappointed is very, very slim.

Review by Hilde Heyvaert. Photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert.

HIGH TECH LOW LIFE

Friday, August 23 2019
Bobble Café, Lomme, France
Sunday, August 25 2019
Le Garage Creative Music, Liège, Belgium

But first let's start with a bonus "CD" review!
It may look like an old school cassette but in reality the band has repurposed past (to them at least) technology to house a USB drive holding not only their 5 song EP, but also imagery and two video clips. You could try to get your hands on it by catching them on their current tour, or by braving the infamous Instagram algorithm and shooting them a DM and try to import it that way from 2069, or you can just wait 'till it's on Spotify, which according vocalist Remy shouldn't be too long now.

Anyway, design all aside, HIGH TECH LOW LIFE is a brilliant cyberpunk band. They sing mostly in English, so no one has to wonder about missing out on the storytelling in the lyrics because they don't speak Japanese. The combination of vocal work from Remy, Deathco and Misako is brilliant. Especially the screamo elements with Misako's almost haunting vocals combined is fantastic. The electro beats are in perfect tandem with the drums and guitar. Basically, if you're into electronic music, check these guys out. It's different, but in the best way possible. And also, who doesn't want a relic from a future that, if they get their message across properly, might never happen?

That HIGH TECH LOW LIFE is pretty darn awesome recorded is pretty clear if you've just read my review of their "tape". That said, they are at the very least, just as amazing live. Their energy is infectious, and you can see an entire crowd dancing and partying like it's 2069 (or possibly just the last day on earth full stop).
Even when the PA isn't the greatest job in the world or the venue is just a bit shit full stop, they still rock the stage and you will still see an amazing gig. Not even the blistering summer heat of global warming at its worst can stop them from getting their message across in the best musical way possible.
And if you shout hard enough after the last song has been played, they will come back for the best rendition of the *Ghostbusters* tune you'll have heard in a long time.

Review by Hilde Heyvaert. Photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert.

Photographic impressions of
FAKE ISLAND live

Friday, August 23 2019; Bobble Café, Lomme, France
Sunday, August 25 2019; Le Garage Creative Music, Liège, Belgium

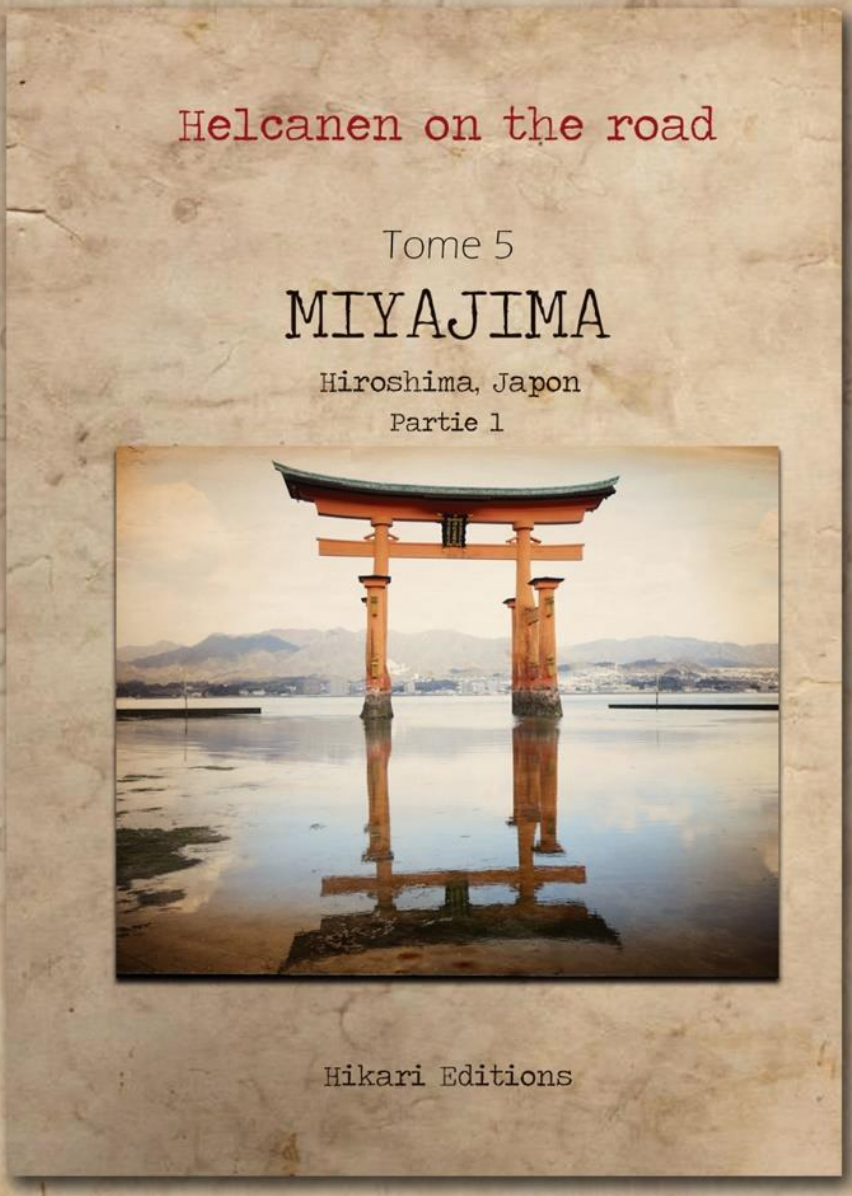
Photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert

Fake Island on stage,
Le Garage Creative Music, Liège, Belgium. Sunday, August 25 2019

Photo by Bert Van den Wyngaert

Instagram/Facebook
Helcanen.on.the.road

Vol. 5
MIYAJIMA
Part 1



Release:
Sept. 2019

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French &
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You'd think a Korean band doesn't quite fit in the scope of BCM, but considering Madmans Esprit is a visual kei band, we are making an exeption.
We sat down with singer Kyuho before the final concert of their EU tour.

You're a gothic visual kei band from Korea, that's used to be situated in Germany. How did all of this come about?
If it had been up to me, I would still be based out of Berlin. But because of the military situation in Korea, my visa couldn't be prolonged and I had to return. I would love to move back to Berlin as soon as possible though.

Your looks are clearly very important, what inspires you for them, and what are your favourite products to use to create them?
Well, to be completely honest, I couldn't say as I don't do my own make-up. Our makeup artist creates the looks for us. Most of the time we plan things out in our mind and then sit together with her. The main idea behind them is early black metal, corpse paint and visual kei. That dark Goth aesthetic that is a mix of the elegant and the grotesque.
How on earth do you keep your pink hair so vibrant?
Chuckles I touch up the colour with new dye once a week. And it's not even a specific brand either. I just buy whatever box of pink hair dye is available at the time. So I can't give you brand recommendations, sorry!

You have celebrated your birthday on the tour, what was the best gift you received?
A lot of local beers, which were really good gifts! The beer in Korea is unacceptably bad, so I was glad to get so many European beers to try out. And of course all the fanart I have received. Fanart especially is very meaningful to me.

Your music is described as "glorifying suicide". Can you explain a little of what you actually mean?
It's the name of our new EP. It's actually kind of a reaction to Kpop. To me, Kpop has zero content, there's no message. It's well made but empty. There's no philosophy behind it. Basically, our new EP is the anti-Kpop. Originally I started out in the black metal scene. Madmans Esprit is very different from that. It's the anti-pop and anti-black metal. Its all a different perspective. I want to point out to people that life and death aren't all that different from each other. Life is very political, there is no free will and no democracy. You don't even chose to be alive, your parents had sex and you were born and that's it. Suicide is the only act of free will people have.

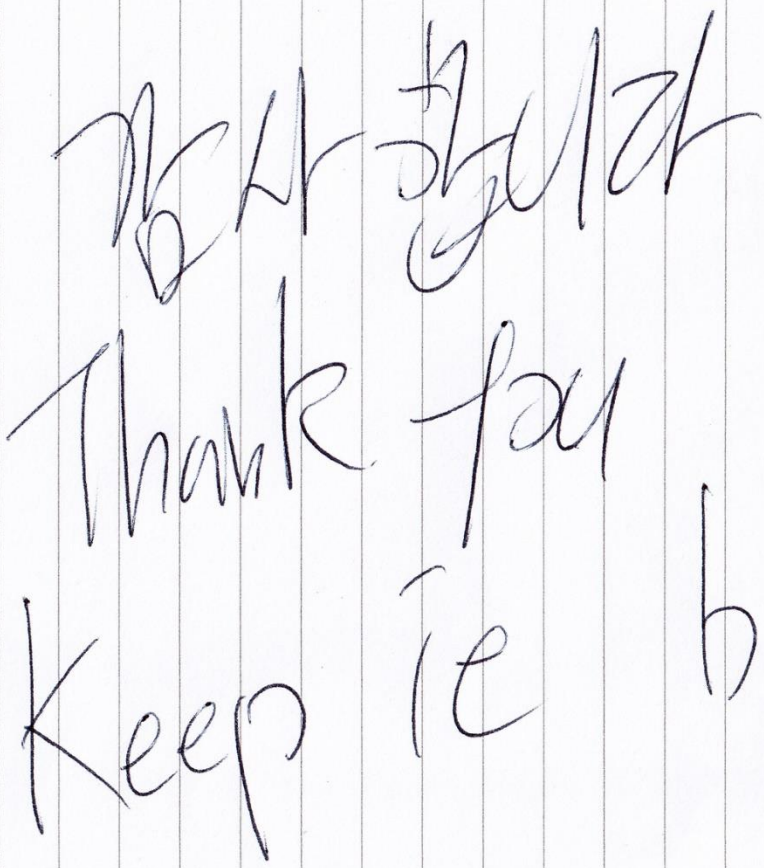
Studies have proven that heavy metal music, especially that with suicide as a theme, can have serious negative effects of people struggling with mental illness. How do you hope your music will influence people who are in that situation?
I'm obviously not encouraging suicide. I hope people don't do it. In the end of the day, I make music for myself and the listener should interpret it how they feel. It can either be a comforting hug or a tip over the edge. The best outcome would be that they get joy out of it, become almost ecstatic listening to it. You know, that feeling you can only get from the beauty of art.

You're an artist as well as a musician. In how far does your art influence your music and vise versa?
They're kind of similar. I'm very interested in time based projects: start to finish. I like modern art especially, because it is more about emotions and new ideas than traditional art. Music, in that sense, is more conservative. I'm always thinking up new combinations of both.

Tell us a little of the Korean Goth scene. How do you feel does it differ from the EU one.
There is no alternative scene in Korea to speak of. Over there we play with metalbands. And people that come to those concerts don't even look like metalheads because of the social backlash. You're supposed to look a certain way, and if you don't, you will get told to conform, all the time. I used to have long hair, and people told me to cut it on the daily.
Don't you get a lot of commentary about your tattoos then? Tattooing is still illegal in Korea isn't it, unless you have a medical degree?
It is, and it's ridiculous. But no, I don't get much remarks about my tattoos, because tattoos in Korea are like weed in The Netherlands. Its illegal, but in the end of the day it's decriminalised.
What's been the biggest cultural difference so far?
People are much more free in the EU. They're not as conservative. Korea has a huge population and it's all very regulated. There's a lot of rules about everything all the time. You don't really get that over here. The EU is also much cheaper compared to Korea.

Today is the tour final. What is your favourite memory of the tour?
In Prague the ticket sales didn't go well at all, which made me really worried about the concert. But the audience was extremely passionate. The same goes for Dordrecht. That's something I've noticed throughout the entire tour. People are so, so passionate. Even if they don't know a word of Korean, they still know the words to all the songs and they were always singing along *smiles*.

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert


Thank you
Keep it beautiful

Win a cheki/Instax photo signed by Kyuho of Madmans Esprit!

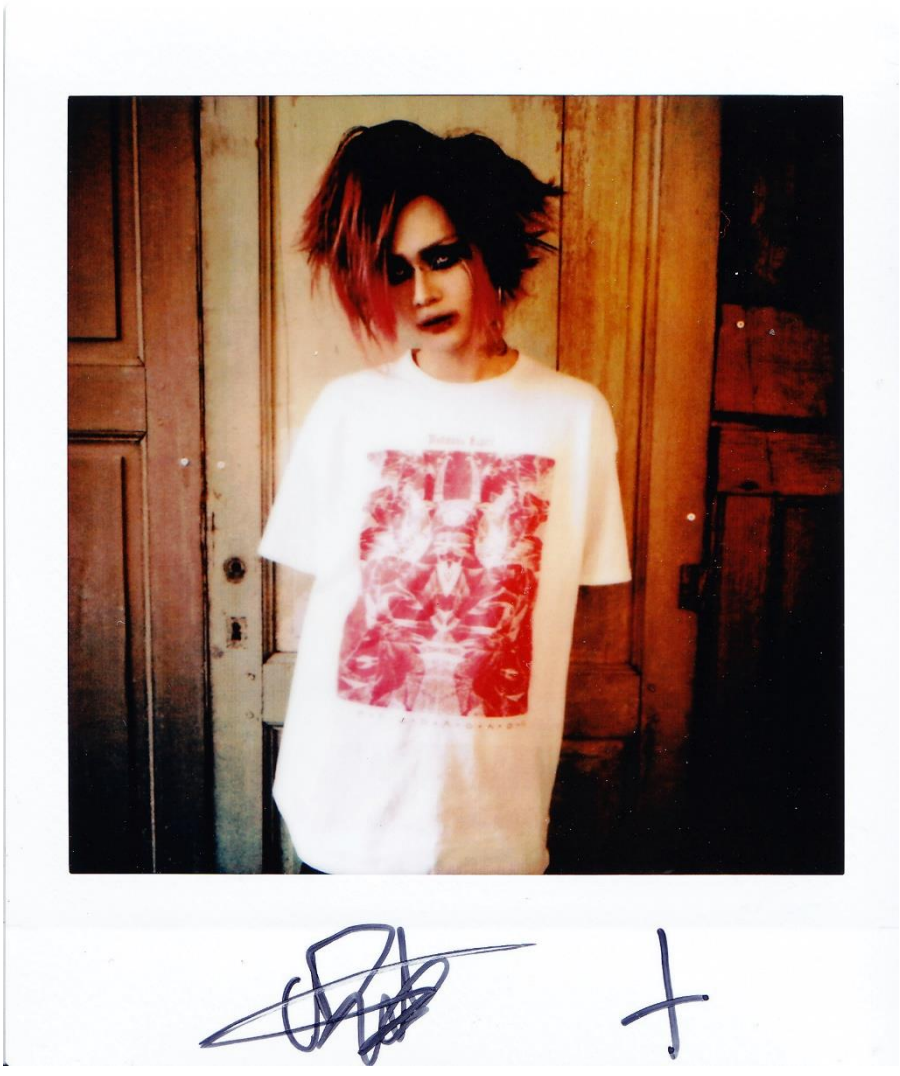
Here's what you can win, as if the title wasn't a dead give-away: an Instax Square format photo signed by Kyuho, frontman of Madmans Esprit! Which he signed for one lucky fan when he was performing at Le Garage in Liège, Belgium with the band.

All you need to do is explain, in your own way, why you should win this particular (signed) cheki.
You can write something, draw something, make a Photoshop collage: anything goes as long as you can send it by email and it is safe for work! So no porn, no smutty fanfic, keep it decent and it's a valid entry ;).

Submissions can be emailed to hilde.heyvaert@gmail.com
The last date for submissions is December 21st, so you still have plenty of time to come up with something!
The winner will be personally notified after the deadline* and asked for their home address so we can mail** out their cheki. Don't worry, your address will NOT be shared or sold to third parties, so your privacy is definitely assured. We don't even store addresses. So you can count on us being GDPR compliant.

* Please take into account that judging takes a bit of time, especially during final editing period of the next edition, so please be patient for the results as it can take a few days for them to be released. We will email everyone that submitted to let them know whether or not they won.

** We rely on regular, unsigned and thus unregistered mail to send out cheki via B-Post and we are no means responsible should the post screw up. They haven't so far and we've sent cheki all over the globe, but you never know so we like to mention this in advance.
They can also take quite a while to deliver, so please be patient. Especially if you live outside of Belgium. Shipping to locations outside of Europe may take anything from a handful of days, to a couple of weeks and even a few months.



BE YOURSELF
WITH SATSUKI

Satsuki is a popular and regular visitor to the European Japanese music scene. We caught up with him during his anniversary tour **Be Yourself.**

This weekend you are performing at *Summer Geek Festival*, what does summer mean to you?
Sun, hot weather. I literally survive the Japanese summer by eating ice cream and sitting in rooms with airconditioning. I used to use a parasol when I did have to go outside, but nowadays I feel they are too girly. So now I only use one on days when its really sunny.

A convention is always full of fandoms, what are you a fan of?
The ice cream shop that's around! Because I'm a huge fan of food *laughs*. Rather than be into any kind of fandom myself, I do love seeing all the cosplayers do their thing. There are some really amazing costumes to be seen today! Watching cosplayers is something I look forward to every convention.

Your tour is called *Be Yourself*, what is most important to you when it comes to being yourself?
Never giving up. That's my advice: just be yourself.

This is also an anniversary tour. In all the years you have been an artist, what has been the best thing about it.
Keep it simple. No matter how hard it is, stay true to your own instincts and to what you stand for. It took me 10 years to get there. To really find my style and be 100% myself regardless of advice from others and such. It's a struggle for sure, but I'm glad I've reached that point.

Your stage style has changed a lot since we saw you last, it's a lot more colourful. Can you tell us a little more about it?
I have changed to this style because it's just super comfortable. I can perform in this, travel in this, it's great. So I wear what I love wearing most because of comfort now really.

***Summer Geek Festival* is the last stop on this EU tour, how has this tour been, experience wise?**
It's been good. vI've gotten a lot of inspiration and new creative ideas from being on the road. I find touring very motivating, especially from seeing and meeting all the different fans. It really charges me up.
Do you see a lot of new faces on tour or is it mostly familiar fans?
It's about 50-50 really. Of course over the years, there are fans that I see every tour, but there are a lot of people each time who I've never seen before. It's great.

Last tour you told us you love receiving magnets as gifts. Did you get many?
Laughs no! Only one! I was gifted one by the tour manager, but she was the only one giving me one! So let's hope that after this interview I'll get a few more next tour *laughs*.

Let's talk tattoos, because you have a lot of them.
My favourite one, which is also the most meaningful to me, is the one on my left wrist. It reads *Quel que tu est simplement*. For me that signifies: simply be yourself. I like it because to me, it's like a constant remember to be myself. I got it during the 2016 Apocalyps tour. I was having a great time on the tour, it was full of good memories so I got the tattoo as a memory. I also like looking at it when I'm on stage. I don't always get tattooed by the same artist or at the same shop. Most I had done in Japan, but I pick the shop and artist depending on the tattoo I want done. Because as you know, not artist does every style and type of designs and it's important to get the right artist for a tattoo. I didn't get any during this tour, but I have gotten tattooed in Belgium and Greece before during previous tours.

Let's close the interview with a message for your fans.
I just want to thank them, really. I'm super happy that even after 10 years, I can still come back to tour in Europe. So thank you!

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert.

Be yourself
by SATSUKI
2019. 6. 29

Win a signed cheki/Instax OR an autograph page by Satsuki!

Here's what you can win, as if the title wasn't a dead give-away: an autographed Instax Square format photo, signed by Satsuki, or an autograph page (postcard format) signed by him (see the page before this one)!

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Submissions can be emailed to hilde.heyvaert@gmail.com
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The winner will be personally notified after the deadline* and asked for their home address so we can mail** out their cheki. Don't worry, your address will NOT be shared or sold to third parties, so your privacy is definitely assured. We don't even store addresses. So you can count on us being GDPR compliant.

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thinking outside
the box with
ekotumi

Japanese artist Ekotumi is well known in Europe thanks to her performances at Japan Expo. Combining Japanese mythology with mediums such as spoken word, dance, theatre and opera for the first time on a Belgian stage, we sat down with her to find out a little more about what drives her.

You are inspired by Japanese mythology. What about it draws you to it so much?
The history for the most part. Japanese stories, both folklore and mythology, have survived for so long. For instance, *Yamata no Orochi*, the famous *eight headed snake*. Even abroad of Japan a lot of people have heard of him. Not just as stories, but they are actively kept alive in shines and festivals. Even though the people who have written them down are long gone, the tales are still alive and they continue to connect us to our past in the present and the future. That's amazing.

What is your favourite yokai and what is your favourite myth?
My favourite yokai is the *Zashiki Warashi*, or the *living room child*. It's the spirit of a boy that resides in old houses. They bring luck to the homes they reside in, which will prosper as long as they are there. Should they leave, however, the house will fall to ruin.
My favourite myth is that of *Yamata no Orochi*. Even now, there are still places that are home to Orochi and his family, I find that so interesting and amazing.

You are currently writing a fantasy novel, can you tell us a little about what it's about?
Its about Japanese mythology, mostly about *Sano*. Our oldest book, the *Koijiki*, can be hard to read and understand in the original version, because of course a language changes and evolves over time. You can still buy modern versions in bookstores of course, where the language has been modernised, so to speak. But what I want to do is write about the tales told between the lines. A fantasy book about the missing parts. I think it will be published this winter in Japan via a publishing company.

Europe also has quite a few myths and a pretty rich folklore, did you research any of it before coming here?
Yes I did *smiles*! Especially the Greek ones. I have read several books on the subject. I have also compared a lot of myths from different countries, and it's amazing how many similarities there often are.

Opera is often mentioned when talking about your work. How does Japanese opera differ from Western opera?
There's not just the cultural differences between Japanese and Western opera, of course. My approach to Japanese opera is still different to what is seen as traditional for Japan. I don't just sing in the style, I combine it with other vocal styles, spoken word and dance. Mine is a new style of Japanese opera because I like to think outside the box *smiles*.

I saw some really cool art on your Instagram (@ekotumi), is that something you are very into?
Smiles I know the drawings you are referring to! Those were made by a fan during one of my concerts. I love seeing fan art, it's so amazing what people can do! I don't draw myself, but I do love art. I love going to museums and I love both traditional art such as our *ukiyo-e* and modern art. My favourite is *Monet*. There are just so many beautiful pieces in the world to admire. My favourite Belgian piece is *The Son of Man* by *René Magritte*, I have a print of it in my home. And I own a big book about his works as well *smiles*.
Were you able to visit a museum this tour?
Sadly no, I had too many concerts planned to be able to take a day off to visit some, but I hope that I will have better luck next time.

Forests and temples are very important to your image, what draws you to them, other than tradition?
I find them very inspirational. I really feel a connectivity to my work in forests and nature. I really connect to them on a spiritual level. It also has to do with shrines that we still have so many of them. A shrine is built on sacred ground, and the surrounding area must forever be untouched. That's why there are so many oases of quiet, even in our big cities. Also because even when a shrine is destroyed, or moved out of safety because the area has become a risk for earth quakes and such, the original area remains sacred and untouched. The new, safer place, will also become sacred and remain.

Today's event is called *A summer day in Japan*, what does summer mean to you?
For the last five years it has meant touring the EU, and especially performing at *Japan Expo* *smiles*. But also *Obon* in August, I always participate in the ceremonies, it's tradition *smiles*.

What do you hope summer, and the rest of the year, will still bring for you?
I hope to see my novel published and my next CD released. I hope to reach many people and hopefully start a new project. And that I can continue to mix tradition and the past with our present. Share our lore, so to speak. I also hope my *Patreon* kicks off, not just because it helps me raise some support for my work, and helps me to be able to create new things, but its also a great way to reach a lot of people and connect to them *smiles*.

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert.

Merci ! Arigato !!

ありがとう

See you again !!

またね !!

13/07/2019

Win a signed cheki/Instax OR an autograph page by Ekotumi!

Here's what you can win, as if the title wasn't a dead give-away: an autographed Instax mini format photo, signed by Etokumii, or an autograph page (postcard format) signed by her (see the page before this one)!

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Starlight, cowboys and inspiration with INORAN

Even amidst his busy schedule, with touring and an upcoming CD release, INORAN had some time to sit down with us and talk about *2019, Starlight, Gundam* and more.

Your new album is called *2019*. What things that happened this year were most important to you when it comes to creating and inspiration?
I was inspired by my dreams and hopes for the future rather than things that happened this year.

You are very busy these days. You are nearly releasing your new album and it's also the 30th anniversary year of *LUNA SEA*. With whom you've made a 40th anniversary of *GUNDAM* song. How hard has it been to combine all these projects?
I certainly am very busy. But actually, I really appreciate that and I'm happy I am so busy because I truly enjoy being part of all these different projects. It's all just a matter of planning.

Are you a GUNDAM fan yourself?
If course I am! I admire *Char Aznabel* from *Mobile Suit Gundam* a lot, as far as the characters go.

When you write music, how do you decide if it will be a song for LUNA SEA or your own solo project?
It actually entirely depends on my mood at the time whether it will be a song for the one or the other.

It's been a while since we heard from *Muddy Apes* and *Tourbillon*. When do you think there will be new works with those bands?
I am always ready to do resume activity with either, but at the moment, there are no plans. It doesn't just depend on my schedule, but that of the other members, too.

Do you have a different way going about making music for each project?
Of course. Each project consists of different members. Be they band members that are always there, or session musicians. Everyone has their own vibe and style, so that automatically changes the way songs for a project are created, you know?

Your tour is called *COWBOY PUNI-SHIT*. How do you relate to cowboys in terms of both your music and performing live?
I think it's mostly the part of being on the road. So I will definitely relate to them a lot when the tour starts.

Which song from 2019 do you think your fans will love hearing live the most?
My guess would be *Long Time Comin…*?

Your first single of the album, *Starlight*, is a beautiful acoustic ballad. Can you tell us a little more about how you came to create it?
It's just one of those songs that came to be when inspiration suddenly struck during the production process. Something inexplicably just led me to creating it.

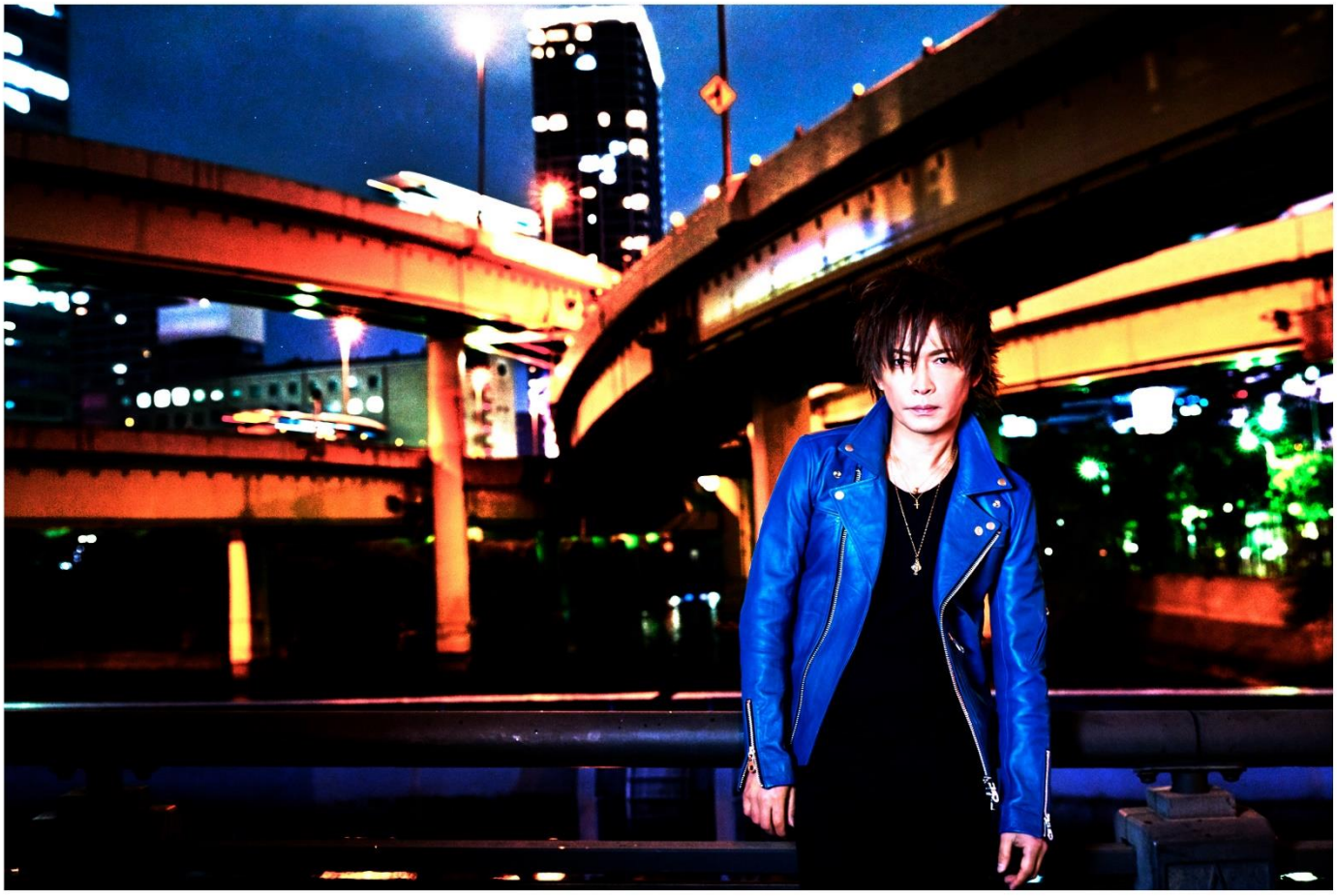
Listening to 2019 I heard a lot of songs that immediately gave a good mood and that made me feel happy. What do you hope your fans will feel when they listen to the album?
I hope everyone can really _feel_ the songs, physically.

Just listening to the album, I can hear that you had a lot of fun making it. What makes you feel the best about recording 2019?
The moment the album was complete and ready to be released, that definitely made me happiest.

***It ain't easy* is a very cheerful sounding song despite the title. What do you think is hardest about being a professional musician for you personally?**
I do manage this, but staying passionate about music all the time. That's definitely the hardest.

The title *I don't know what to say* makes me think of moments when you lose your inspiration of a time. Every artist deals with an art block or writer's block sometimes, what do you do to get out of a funk like that?
Step away from it for a moment. Once you distance yourself a bit, if only for a short while, you will see how important it is to you and you can go back to it and continue. At least, that's what works for me.

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Japanese translations by Sonoko Yamaguchi. Photography provided by King Records.



DYSTOPIA IN 2069
HIGH TECH LOW LIFE

HIGH TECH LOW LIFE, the cyberpunk band from Okinawa, came as somewhat of a surprise to the European scene. Not just a band, but an entire world building setting with their own characters and concept. Which is, in itself nothing new as many steampunk bands have done that. But their intent on doing better and saving the future is something done so well, I had to go and investigate. So I sat down with the guys from HIGH TECH LOW LIFE to find out more about what they drives us, and the terrible possible futures converging in 2069, which is, let's face it, not that far away!

You're time travellers. How did you come back to what is your past, aka today?
Tone (guitar): We have this transmitter device that we stole from the government. Initially we didn't know how to use it, but Remy figured it out. At first we thought it was alien technology, but it turned out to be future tech.
Remy (vocals): 2069 is when we all came together and found each other. We're actually all from different time lines. There's so many ways in which the world got messed up. 2069 is when all of us were coming from different times, trying to fix the past. We are all failures on our own, but in assembling this team after we slowly got together, we might be able to make a change.

Your stage show has a very *Cyberdog* meets *Mad Max* feel to it. How do dystopia and cyberpunk influence your music?
Remy: I would say that a lot of it probably comes through via the lyrics. In the way that we are describing what's happening and what the future is like.
Tone: It's like what you were saying yesterday. We're living in a time now where all the things in cyberpunk novels from the 80s and 90s are coming true: cybernetics, AI, ... We are the generation that's going to see cyberpunk fiction become reality.
Which cyberpunk novels do you find particularly inspiring?
Tone: Of course there's *William Gibson*, *Neal Sephenson*, even some *Philip K. Dick*, even though that's more sci-fi. The trippiness, and the distorted timelines is what we really like about it.

You're from a future that is looking bleak. What current events do you feel were at the base of that future?
Remy: It's a culmination of humanity separating ourselves more and more of the real physical world. And offloading more and more of our own thinking onto artificial intelligence. Letting them decide how things should be for us. Just getting as much dopamine as we can. As long as we get that, we're happy, and all the while the machines give us what we want. It becomes more and more engrained in our everyday life. It started with having a computer on your desk, and now we have a computer in our hands, and the next step will be having a computer in our brains.
Which is what *Elon Musk* wants.
Remy: Exactly. And people are going to do that. It's going to happen.

So is 2069 more of a *Terminator* kind of future or is it more like what we know from Mad Max?
Remy: So, there's different possible futures. We're all coming from a different one, meaning there are so many different ways that dystopia can happen. For some of us, the future is more like that of Mad Max, for others it's like the ones you see in Terminator.
So for you guys, all these moves that are in actuality cautionary tales and not just *Hollywood* entertainment, such as Terminator, Mad Max, *Ex Machina*, *I am Mother*, ... are real?
Remy: Yes! It's not just the one future in which things go wrong. We're from all those different places.

Do you hope that your music will influence people to do better in the hope of averting your 2069?
Tone: The message is as simple as "tend to the garden". Work on yourself, tend to yourself. Its essentially the only way you're going to influence the people around you and make a change.
Remy: Whatever you do becomes reality.

I'm glad to hear that *Ghostbusters* is still a thing in the future. What else from these times is still important?
Tone: Of course! Music! There's nothing more human *smiles*.
Remy: There's not much left, it's pretty bleak. It's a sad future where we're pretty much running for our lives, every day.

What do you want to make sure your fans know about the band? What message do you absolutely want to get across?
Tone: Be the hero to your own story. When making decisions, ask yourself what the hero would do, and let that guide you.
Remy: Everyone now, are the people that are making the future.
Iwao (drums): We create our own realities, and that reality is what is going to make the future . That's why we came back to make a change, and that's how it's done.

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Japanese translation for Iwao by Remy. Photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert.

Win a signed cheki/Instax by HIGH TECH LOW LIFE!

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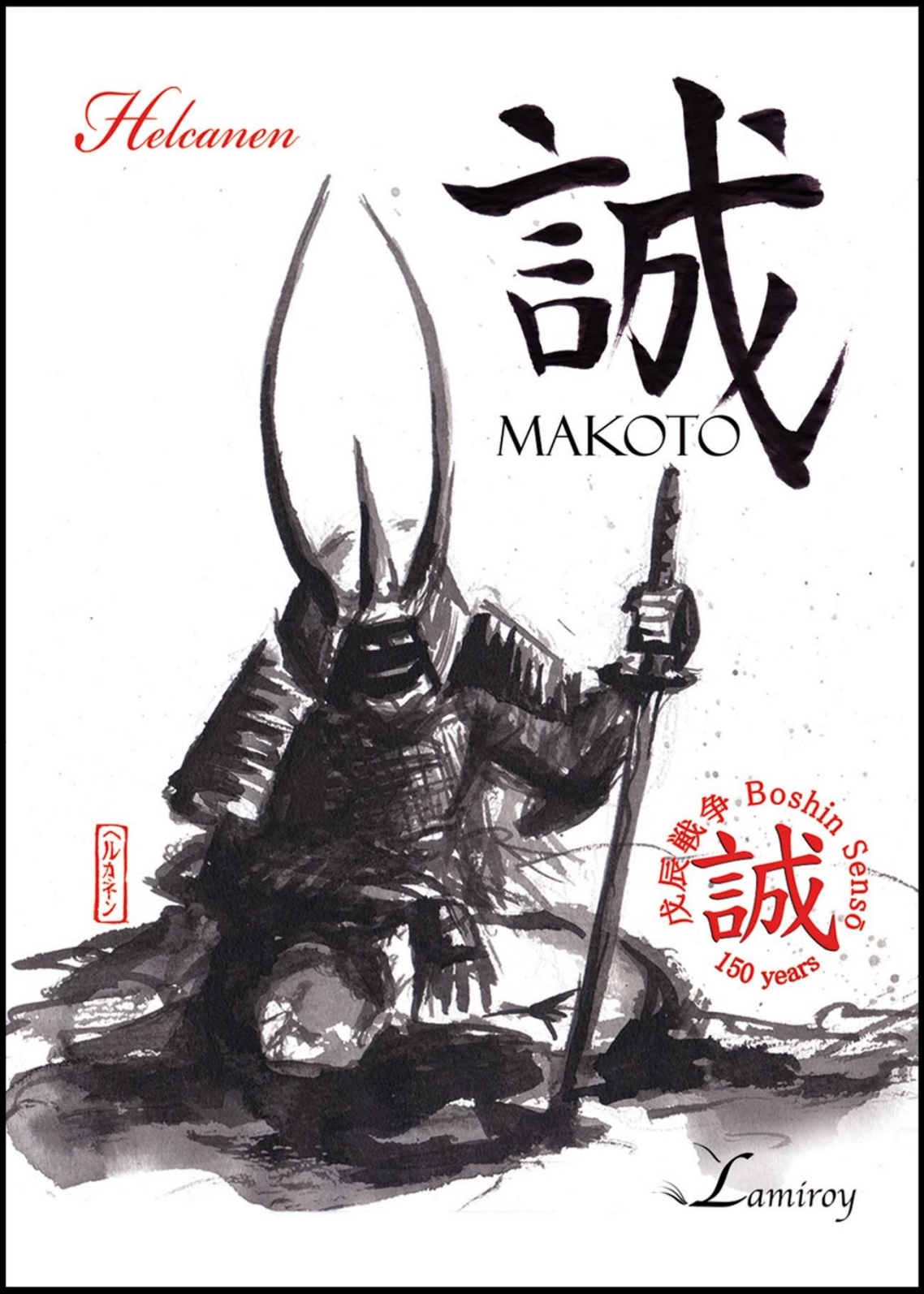

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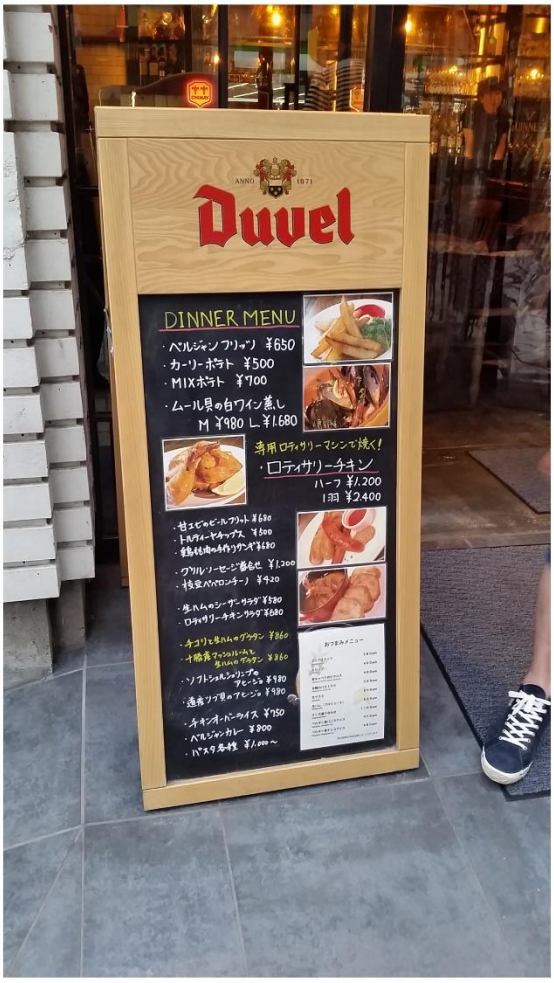
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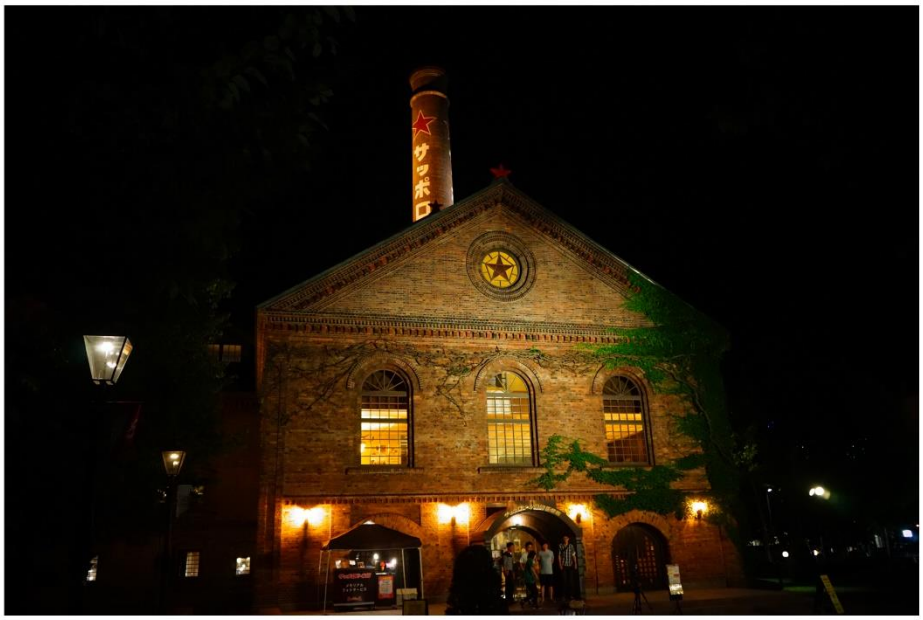

Dinner at the Beer Garten

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Sapporo Tokeidai

(sapporo clock tower)

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Scale of fortune
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Lucky
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末吉 Suekichi
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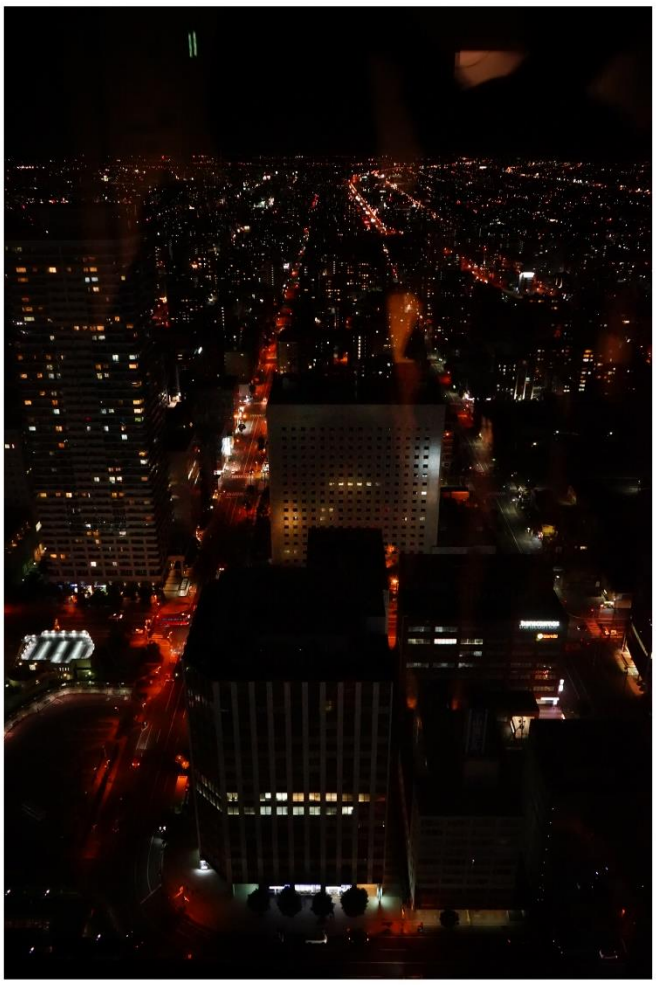

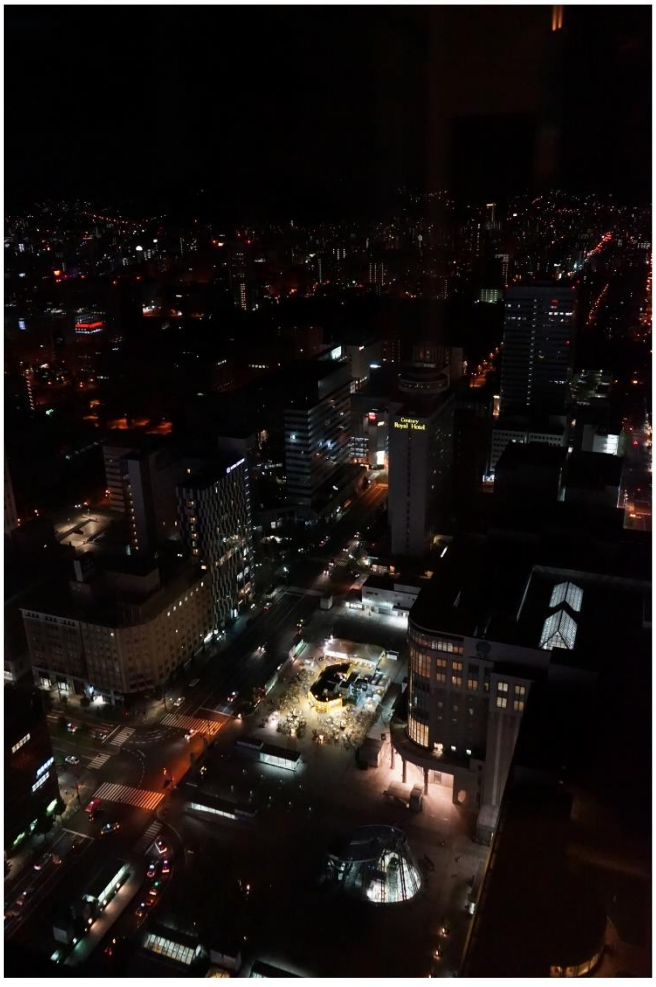

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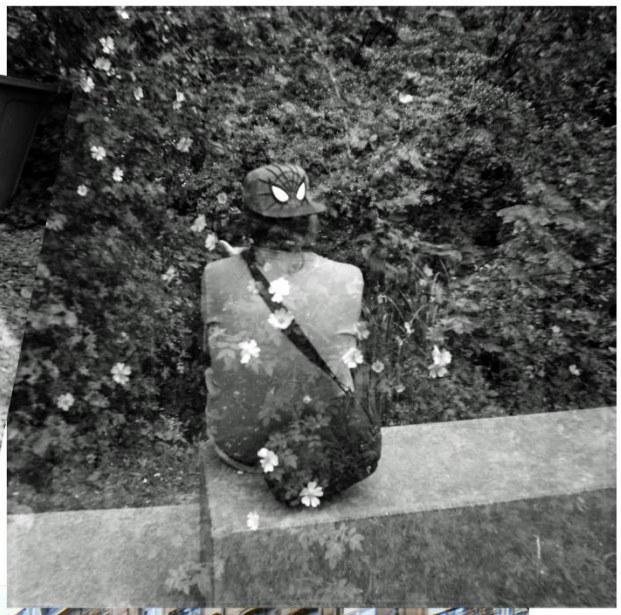

COMIC CON GENT SNAP

ICC, Ghent, Belgium. Sunday, May 5 2019

Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert

SUMMER GEEK FESTIVAL

SNAP

Lotto Mons Expo, Mons, Belgium. Saturday, June 29 2019

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Further extrapolating on the issues touched upon in the previous article (The Big Earth Day Issue in previous edition of BCM), I've been wondering about the bigger picture in regard to the whole plastics issue, and particularly mainstream campaigns that have been happing recently.

For years, plastic has enabled many advances in technology and the way of human life. From being used to keep food fresh to enabling modern-day conveniences, and even being used in heavy industry, plastic from the early days of petroplastics have often been regarded as 'the material of the future' that is flexible, durable, and versatile, and when the economics-of-scale tipped in favour of plastic, it was also hailed for its low cost. However, the issue highlighted with plastics today is that they were never designed from the onset with consideration to end-of-life, particularly as lighter-weight plastics became more common since the 1980s for convenience applications, such as straws, cutlery, food packaging, and more contentiously, bags. As a result, their disposal has become a global issue that has left the world scrambling for solutions.

However, many of those solutions often revolve around banning the material outright for convenience applications, or in the case of bags, either imposing fees on them or mandating a minimum thickness (e.g. 50µm for France - based on EU guidelines - or 57.15µm-101µm; 2.25-4mil for many cities in the United States), or in more extreme cases such as Kenya, banning them altogether with the threat of substantial fines or even a jail sentence. Most bans often result in alternatives growing in popularity, or a booming reuse culture. In the case of straws, many alternatives range from paper to a new generation of bioplastics that are often plant or food-based, while the alternatives for plastic cutlery are often made out of wood or, like bioplastic straws, plant or food-based alternatives. Of the alternatives, paper and wood is often the most popular, due to their supposed natural biodegradable properties and renewability.

Paper straw at a UK McDonalds.

But is paper really the solution to plastic? Even with sustainability schemes such as the *Forest Stewardship Council* (FSC), which promote responsible production of wooden and paper products, and renewal of forests, the issue is that trees are essential in the fight against climate change, another current environmental issue that's arguable even greater than solving the plastic conundrum, and over-consumption of paper and wood would deprive the Earth of carbon-absorbing capacity, particularly since even the renewal of forests takes decades to to grow back into full capacity, and particularly with paper products, the amount of resources required to produce a paper product, especially shopping bags, far outweigh plastic, and the amount of carbon emissions stemming from paper bag production and distribution is also greater. Not to mention that paper waste is also a huge issue, and although paper may seem to be better than plastic in terms of degradability and recyclability, paper only degrades under certain circumstances, and when disposed of in landfill, gives off harmful methane gases. That said, paper is widely recycled, but even recycling also presents challenges: paper can only be recycled a certain number of times before the paper can no longer be repulped, and thus, virgin pulp has to be added to the chain, which means that there's still deforestation involved.

So, what is the real solution? Do we go back to the antediluvian days of inconvenience, and ditch our over-consumerist and disposable ways, thus risking a decline in economy and living standards, or do we come up with a happy medium that pleases divided eco-warriors and those who abhor inconvenience unpopular changes result, and still be able to attain high standards of living, and thus having an economy that can still grow while being truly sustainable? As pro-plastic proponents say, the real issue is littering, poor waste management practices and a lack of proper recycling infrastructure that ensures proper plastics recycling. And they couldn't be more right: the reason why plastics often end up in nature, and particularly the oceans, is because of poor waste management. According to the *Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research* in *Leipzig*, *Germany*, 90% of the ocean's plastic waste problem originates out of 10 rivers around the world. 8 are situated in *Asia* (the vast majority of which are located in China), while 2 are situated in *Africa*: the *Niger* and the *Nile*. The majority of it is, as mentioned above, due to poor waste management practices and a lack of real infrastructure to deal with the waste.

A coffee cup recycling point. As mentioned in the previous article, the issue of recycling paper cups containing plastic coating and lids led to one independent coffee chain phasing them out in favour of a BYO model, which has resulted in lower sales.

But what about closer to home? The issue is mostly down to careless littering and the need for better infrastructure to deal with plastic recycling at home. In the UK, there are varying standards of recycling, but not all councils recycle the same range of plastics. In fact, some only have a narrow range, which results in other plastics either requiring dedicated facilities or simply being put into general waste, which may result in incineration into energy, or worse, landfilling. Since China implemented a moratorium on importing foreign waste to be recycled last year, the Western World went into meltdown. A huge scramble began to find alternative markets and solutions, but so far, there's yet to be a huge breakthrough.

The 3-Rs on a US Disney Parks plastic carrier bag.

In the meantime, how do you truly be green without adding to the carbon footprint? If, like me, you've been hoarding countless plastic bags and containers that are perfectly reusable, the best way is to reuse them until they reach the end of their useful lives and recycle where facilities do exist, though if you've also got a tonne of reusable bags that you've probably acquired from a trade fair, convention or wherever, make sure they're properly reused according to climate and production impact indicators published in various lifecycle analyses on shopping bags.

Ekotumi in Liège, Belgium,
during the *A Summer Day in Japan* event at Le Garage Creative Music.

Photo by Bert Van den Wyngaert